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HISTORY
OF
BETH



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THE HISTORY
OF
BLYTH,

FROM THE NORMAN CONQUEST TO THE
PRESENT DAY.

BY
JOHN WALLACE.

SECOND EDITION,
REVISED AND CONSIDERABLY ENLARGED.
TOGETHER WITH
AN APPENDIX.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

BLYTH:
JOHN ROBINSON, JUN.. PRINTER AND PUBLISHER.

1869.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR GEORGE GREY, BARONET,
G.C.B., M.P.,
FALLODEN, NORTHUMBERLAND,
THE FIRST REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT OF THE
BOROUGH OF MORPETH,
AFTER THE INCORPORATION THEREWITH FOR PARLIAMENTARY
PURPOSES, OF THE TOWNSHIPS OF
SOUTH BLYTH AND NEWSHAM, and COWPEN,
THIS SECOND EDITION OF THE
HISTORY OF BLYTH
IS, WITH SENTIMENTS OF SINCERE ESTEEM, MOST RESPECTFULLY,
AND BY PERMISSION, DEDICATED, BY
THE PUBLISHER.

Blyth, December 20th, 1869.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

ENCOURAGED by the favourable reception accorded to the former edition of this work, the writer has prepared a new and enlarged edition ; thus endeavouring to make the book still more worthy of public favour. Several interesting facts that have turned up in the course of the author's researches have been incorporated in the body of the book, while a number of minor events that there is reason to believe the Blyth public would not willingly see pass unrecorded have been put into the appendix, in chronological order. Several other matters are placed in the appendix, which it is hoped will give greater completeness to the History of Blyth. The great and long-continued depression in the trade of the locality has caused the question to be somewhat anxiously proposed as to what are the future prospects of Blyth as a place of business. We think Blyth's grand opportunity for enlargement has been lost. Had measures been taken to provide accommodation at Blyth for the new trade that was springing up when the steam coal field was first opened out, by this time it would have been what its position and other advantages pointed it out to be—the port of shipment of the steam coal of the district ; and this very much to the benefit of those engaged in the trade : the saving in leadage alone would not only have met the cost of the necessary improvement of the harbour, but have left over and above a handsome per centage towards the coalowners' profits. But though Blyth may never become a large and prosperous town, nor its port take

rank among those of the first class, yet there is no reason to fear but that it will continue to go on gradually to increase in the future as it has done in the past, always affording a fair field for the industry and enterprize of its inhabitants.

JOHN WALLACE.

Blyth, Dec. 22nd, 1869.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

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The First Edition was published 7 Years ago and is now sold out. The present Edition has been prepared for the press by the Author, and besides being printed from a beautiful New Type purchased expressly for it, the Work will be found to be considerably enlarged.

It is almost needless to state that a Work of this nature—the circulation of which is necessarily limited—cannot be produced except at a cost comparatively heavy. The price, however, has been kept down to 3s., and it is hoped the sale will be sufficient to justify the production of the Book, and obviate any loss to the Publisher.

JOHN ROBINSON, JUN.

Publisher.

*17, Freehold Street, Blyth,
Dec. 20th, 1869.*

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E R R A T A .

Page 234, 8th line from the bottom, read *John* instead of *James* Laidler.
 Page 122, top line, read 13th of *March* instead of *December*.

HISTORY OF BLYTH.

CHAPTER I.

History of Newsham from the Conquest to 1723. The Delavals. Adam Fitz Geoffrey's claims to Newsham. Claim compromised. Richard de Newsum. George Cramlington. Thomas Cramlington. John Ogle; his will and inventory. Lancelot Cramlington. Robert Cramlington. Newsham sequestered. Philip Cramlington. Colonel Ratcliffe. Sale of Newsham in 1723, to Matthew White, Esq. William Silvertop.

WE cannot trace back the History of Blyth to a beginning. For several centuries all we can learn respecting it is through its connexion with Newsham, which continued to be the more important place till at least the middle of the seventeenth century, and we do not find any account of Newsham till after the Conquest, when it is in the possession of the Delavals. The Delavals were related to the family of the Conqueror, by the marriage of Guy Delaval to Dionesia, niece of the Conqueror, and second daughter of Robert, Earl Montagne. Sir Hendrick Delaval, second son of Guy Lord Delaval, carried one of the head banners in the army of William, duke of Normandy, when he invaded

England, and in that capacity took an active share in the great battle of Hastings. On the submission of the country to William he divided the broad lands of England among his followers, and as was to be expected his own kinsman, and one who had borne high office in the conquering army, was sure to obtain a large share of the spoil: hence, besides the lands which the Delavals got in Northumberland, they held others in the counties of York, Northampton, Lincoln, and Oxford—in all, twenty-two knights' fees. In the reign of king John, Newsham was held by Gilbert De la Val, who was one of the barons of England, who, headed by Robert Fitz-Walter, met the king at Runnymede and Staines near Windsor, on the fifteenth of June, 1215, and compelled him formally to sign the grant of privileges known as Magna Charta, and which has ever since been deemed the foundation of England's liberties. At the period when Newsham is held by Gilbert, we get the first glimpse of Blyth, which incidentally turns up in the record of a law-suit.

In the reign of John, a law-suit was instituted by Adam Fitz-Geoffrey, who claimed four carracutes of land in Newsham, against Gilbert De la Val, the lord of the barony. The controversy was terminated by a compromise, the terms of which are recorded on the plea-roll of the ninth year of that king (1208). In the first place Adam acknowledges the paramount title of Gilbert to the whole of the land in dispute, and accepts of a moiety, out of which is excepted the salt pans on the Snook (Snoc), the fishery of Blume, and the capital messuage of Newsum, in compensation for which he receives a fur-

ther moiety of another carracut^e* of land, formerly the property of his father Geoffrey, together with the advowson of one carracut^e of land, formerly granted by ancestors of his own to the brethren of an hospital; the whole to be held by knight's-service, calculating eighteen carracutes as one knight's fee. It is further agreed that in consideration of forty marks paid by Gilbert to Adam, the latter shall renounce all claims which he has, or may have, to any part of the lands of the said Gilbert in Seaton, Callerton, or Dissington, save only a right of common or pasture, as the same is enjoyed by Gilbert's own tenants, upon the lands of Seaton. For permission to enter into this agreement (*pro licentia concordandi*), Adam pays to the crown a fine of ten marks. This document contains the earliest mention of the Snook of Blyth, a term still applied in other localities, as at Seaton Carew, Holy Island, &c., to a promontory, but now corrupted into "Nook." The notice of the salt pans and of the fishery, is also one of the earliest indications we have of the incipient trade of the port. The connexion of Adam's family with Newsham must have been of some standing, from the fact of the above grant by his ancestors to the hospital.

In the reign of Henry II, the three and a half carracutes of land continued to be held as one-third of a knight's fee, the possessor being Richard de Newsum.

* CARRACUTE—a plough-land; as much arable land as one plough, with the animals that worked it, could cultivate in a year. There were attached to it houses, meadows, and pasture land, for the use and maintenance of the tenant. Like the bovat^e, or ox-gang, it varied in extent in various places. In Bolden book it occurs but once, where it is stated to contain 120 acres. Fleta says, if land lay in three common fields a carracut^e was 180 acres, 60 for winter, 60 for spring tillage, and 60 for fallow; but if it lay in two fields, 160 acres, 80 for tillage and 80 for fallow.

The other two carracutes, retained by Gilbert de la Val, had in the meantime been granted to a junior member of his house, and were now held by Henry de la Val in soccage, by an annual payment of half a mark (*testa de Nevil*). In the twenty-fourth year of Edward III, Robert de la Val held twenty-four acres of land with their appurtenances at Newsum, at which time he is represented as an adherent of the king's enemies in Scotland (*inquisitiones ad quod Dominum*). Either the transgression must have been pardoned, or the lands, if forfeited, restored to his family, as nine years afterwards they are still in the possession of Robert de la Val. The inquisition then made, further shows that Sir Robert de la Val, knight, was possessor of the whole of Newsham, previous to the tenth year of Richard II. In 1382, Newsham and Horton were assessed at 3s. for the expenses of the knights of the shire, Adamoras d'Athol and Rad de Eure, during their attendance on parliament that year. Coupén and Bebside were each assessed at 2s., and Harford and Stikelaw 3s. 4d. for the same purpose. Newsum was in the possession of John de la Val in the reign of Henry VI. The inquisition on the death of the latter was held in the first year of Edward IV, 1471, but it must have been some time after his death, as the name of his successor, George Cramlington, occurs in the Lawson pedigree as the proprietor in the previous reign.

George Cramlington was a younger brother of Sir William Cramlington, of Cramlington, and probably acquired Newsham by marriage with the heiress of De la Val. Thomas Cramlington appears from the escheat-

or's books to have been proprietor in the tenth year of the reign of Elizabeth. Sir John Delaval, who died in 1562, made a bequest of a whye and calf to Thomas Cramlington, and in 1572 his name appears as a witness to the will of Sir John Delaval—son and successor of the above-named Sir John. He afterwards married Ann, the youngest daughter, who inherited from her father a fortune of one hundred marks. Thomas succeeded to the estate when very young, and died in 1624. John Ogle occupied the mansion house at Newsham in 1561, and farmed the estate, and indeed the Bebside estate as well, of which he was proprietor. This wealthy gentleman, a scion of the house of Ogle, was second son of Sir William Ogle, of Cockle Park, county of Northumberland, a knight, by Margaret, daughter of Sir John Delaval, of Seaton Delaval. He married Phillis, daughter of John Ogle, of Ogle castle, gentleman, and died in 1586, his wife surviving him many years. In her will, which is dated June 22nd, 1606, she describes herself as "late of Newsham, now being at Lemengton." His will bears the date of 1586, and as it with the inventory of his effects, mirrors forth to us in our day such an interesting representation of social and domestic life among men of his rank, besides furnishing a distinct view of the state of agriculture in those times, we present these documents entire:—

"JAN. 18th, 1685-6. John Ogle, of Newsham, in the County of Northumberland, gentleman. My body to be buried within the Chapel of Seaton Delaval. To be distributed among the poor, 40s. To my eldest son, William Ogle, all my lands in Bebside, to him and his heirs male lawfully begotten, and in default of such to my son Ralph, then to my son Lancelot, then to my brother James Ogle, and then to my right heirs. To my son William one hundred marks, my best grey horse, one silver salt and six silver spoons, my best suit of apparel, viz., a cleak, a doublet, hose and

stockings, my bows and quivers, with arrows. To my son Thomas, in full contentation of his child's portion, £100, to be delivered by my son-in-law, Peter Delaval, to be employed for the use of my son Thomas. And in token of remembrancer, I give to my said son Peter 10s. To my sons Ralph and Lancelot, to each of them, one hundred marks, in contentation of their child's portions, and they to be committed to the custody of my brother James. To my son-in-law, Lancelot Cramlington, £40, in full payment of two hundred marks, which I gave in marriage with my daughter Mary. To my daughter, Elizabeth Ogle, £100, to be delivered to Mr. Robert Delaval, Esq., and his wife, for my daughter's use. To my daughter, Margaret Ogle, £100, to be delivered to my sister in law Isabella, wife to my brother James Ogle, for the use of my said daughter. To my daughters Barbara and Dorotye Ogle, to each of them, one hundred marks, and they to remain with my wife. And if it happen any of my said children to die, then his or their portion to be divided equally among the rest. To James Ogle of Hebborne, one young quye of two years old. To Bryan Ogle, of Shilvington, one young quye of two years old. To my brother James's sons, John, George, Cuthbert, Robert, and Charles Ogle, to every one of them, an old annuell. My will is that all my cattle shall remain and depasture upon my grounds at Bebside and Newsham, as they are at this instant, until after St Helen's day next; and that the oat-land in Newsham and Bebside, ready to be sown, shall be sown with oats, so as the commodity thereof may redound to the use of my children. The rest of all my Goods I give unto my son Lancelot, whom I make my sole Executor. And I heartily request my dearly beloved friends Robert Delaval, James Ogle, Edward Gray, Matthew Ogle, Oliver Ogle, and James Lyle, to be supervisors. WITNESSES—Robert Delaval, James Ogle, Matthew Ogle, Oliver Ogle, Martin Ogle, Brian Ogle, Robert Lawson, Marmaduke Fenwick, and George Jordan. (Proved May 9th, 1586.)

Inventory, JAN. 20th, 1585-6. Newsham. *Cattle*.—Nineteen oxen, £49 1/8; seventeen three-year old stotts, £34; twenty-two milk kine, six young calves, with one bull, £46; fifteen calves, yearlings, £7; one hundred and twenty-one ewes and four rams, £40; thirty-five tanned gimmers, £4 13/4; 72 hogs, £9 12/; 1 pied gelding, £6; 1 young grey gelding, £6; 1 sorrelled gelding, £5; 1 pied mare, 50/; 1 old black mare, 30/; 1 great grey gelding, £3 6/8; 1 dun nag, 19/6; 1 great white mare, 40/; 1 young grey filley, 50/; 1 young grey mare, £6; 2 colt foals, 50/; 3 sows, 15/; 1 boar and 2 shots, 12/; 1 old goose and 2 ganders, 3/6. *Grain and Corn*.—Wheat, 87 bolls, £50 7/; malt, £3 10/3; oats, two hundred and nine bolls, three pecks, £52 15/5; peas, three bolls, 15/; wheat, reaped anno 1586, one hundred and forty-two thraves, at four a boll, £24. *Plough and Wain Gear*.—Three long wains, 20/; three muck wains, 18/; two ploughs, 7/; ten iron sommes (traces), two shackles and bolts, 16/4; seven yokes, eighteen bows, 6/8; three ox harrows, whereof one is broken, with iron teeth, 13/4; two pair of horse harrows, 6/; four muck forks, /8; four pitch forks, /4; three ware hacks, /13; 1 teaming muck hack, /2; three spades, 1 barn shovel, /12; two wain ropes, 2/; three whin hacks, 2/; an axe, /8; two wimbles and one gripe, /10. *In the Chamber over the Hall*.—1 trundle bedstead, 4/; 1 feather bed and bolster, 20/; 1 mattress, 4/; one long table with a frame, 4/; one great wooden press, 26/8; one square table with a frame, 4/; one chest and one old chair, 4/4; woollen hangings about the chamber, 24/; one carpet

and six cushions, 30/. *In the Chamber over the Parlour.*—Three feather beds and three bolsters, 46/6; eight pair of blankets, 48/; eleven pillows, 6/8; two mattresses and twenty happings, or coverings, £3 6/8; nine old happings, 18/; three pistre coverings, 20/; 2 standing bedsteads, 35/; curtains, red and green, 2 pair, with flyers, 20/; two trundle bedsteads, 8/; two cupboards and three chests, 15/. *In the Parlour.*—One standing yellow bedstead, with red and yellow hangings of woollen, 24/; two folding bedsteads and one trundle bedstead, 6/; one feather bed and one bolster, 2/4; one cupboard, carved, 13/4; one old counter, /8; one old wooden chair, and a peck for corn measuring, one bedstead in the little parlour, /6. *In the Hall.*—One large table with frame, 10/; two cupboards, 8/; one form, one chair, and one kenning measure, /42. *In the Buttrie.*—One silver salt and six silver spoons, £3; one cupboard, 5/; four latyne candlesticks, 4/; two pewter candlesticks, 3/; one chafing dish, /14; two pewter salts, /8; one bason and ewer of pewter, 4/; one latyne bason, /18; three pewter chamber pots 3/. *Lying with other things in the Chapel and Garret-loft.*—Two standing bedsteads, one trundle bedstead, one old cupboard, and three coney nets, 20/; three old bedsteads, two scythes, two old bills, and one woollen wheel, 6/; ten pair of flaxen sheets, £4; eight pillow-beers, 10/; five pair of coarse sheets, 10/; five flaxen table cloths, 25/; two coarse table cloths, 2/6; one cupboard cloth, one long towell, 2/8; one dozen table napkins, one slaughter spade, /6. *In the Kitchen.*—One old brewing cauldron, 4/; one new brewing cauldron, 20/; two kettles for milkness, /8; four brass pots, 12/; one iron chimley in the hall, 13/4; four chimley crooks, 5/; two spits, two pair of tongs, and one iron pot, 2/; two pair of pot-clips, /4; one mortar and pestal, 2/; three spears and three lances, 8/; seventy-three pounds of pewter vessels, at /7 in the pound, 42/. *In the Malt-loft.*—Eleven stones of wool, 58/8; one winnowing cloth, 6/. *In the Brewhouse.*—One masking tub and three cooling tubs for wort, 4/; three leaven tubs, one boulding tub, and one dry ware tub, /20; ten beer barrels and two stands, 7/4; one soe for water, /18; two milking pails, /8; one pair for wort, /3. *In the Milkhouse.*—Two milk tubs, /12; five bowls for milk, 2/; three churns, 2/; one cheese press, 8/; four cheese fats, 2/6; one brake and moulding board and two bee-hives, 10/. *In the Study.*—Two jacks and two steel caps, 33/4; two bows, one quiver, and one bag with arrows, 13/4; money and gold found ready there, £21 4/; two brand irons, with other iron stuff, 2/6; one pair playing tables, /6.

Beaside. Cattle.—Twenty oxen, £51 13/4; twenty-two year-old stotts and quies, £22; thirty kine, £60; eight three-year old stotts and quies, and one bull, £12; twelve calves, not yearings, £9. *Corn and Grain.*—Wheat, fifty bolls two pecks, £24 13/4; wheat, reaped anno 1586, one hundred and twenty thraves, £18. Cats, reaped anno 1586, two hundred and forty thraves, at five stooks a boll. *Wain gear and plough gear.*—Two long wains and two muck wains, 26/8; two ploughs and one old plough, 7/; ten soames and two shackles and bots, 16/; twelve yokes and twenty bows, 6/; one ox harrow with iron teeth, 3/4; one pair of horse harrows with iron teeth 2/6; one teanige muck hack, /2; three muck forks shod with iron, 6/; three pitch forks for corn or hay, /3; two whin backs, /12; one shovel and two spades, /8; two wain ropes, 2/8; four traces, /4; twenty-two timber trees, 40/; one oat cl east in the barn, 13/4; twenty-one timber trees in Wendley, £3; nine timber trees in Shadfen, 20/.

Debts due to John Ogle. William Winship, of Backworth, £3 6/8; Robert Johnson, of Monkseaton, 15/; Robert Ogle, of Newcastle, 23/4; Thomas Preston, for two timber trees, 10/; George Fenwick, of Hedwin, 40/; Thomas Swan, of Seaton, 15/; Martin Fenwick, of Hedwin, 15/; William Harbottle and John Spring, 26/8; Joshua Delaval, for wheat, oats, &c., 17/4; Lionel Watson, 40/; Gerard Lilburn and Robert Johnson, £4; Bennet Watson, £4; John Smith, of Newcastle, for sheep, £8; John Smith, the elder, of Cowpen, for three bolls of wheat, 21/; Mrs. Mary Cramlington, for five stones of butter at 4/ the stone, and three cheeses/12 a-piece, 23/; Lancelot Cramlington, for two stone of wool, 15/; Thomas Stone, for one stone of wool, 7/6; William Pearson, for two stone of wool, 14/; Thomas Milburn, of Morpeth, for three stone of wool, 22/6; Joshua Delaval, for three stone of butter and two cheeses, 14/. Due for geste cattle, from Michaelmas to Candlemas, 44/10.

Debts due for John Ogle to pay. Servants' wages, £36 9/; for reaping the corn at Newsham and Bebside, £3 1/2; for the tythe corn and lambs at Newsham, by a bill made to the Earl of Northumberland, £5; to Mr. Bates, £40; to Lancelot Cramlington, £40; to Lancelot Brown, 3/2; to William Brown, the tailor, 13/4; to Anthony Felton, 36/4; for one whole year's rent of the West Sputtle, due at Martinmas, 1585, 26/8; to Anthony Morpeth, £4 18/7; to Anthony Morpeth, for blackes, £17 8/6; to William Hutherwicke, 11/6; to George Jurdene, for engrossing certain assurances, 6/8; to Robert Lewin, for a half-year's rent (interest) for his wife's dower, £3 6/8; funeral expenses, £6 1/.

In presenting these interesting documents we have been careful, as far as desirable, to dispense with the orthographical peculiarities of the period to which they belong; but we cannot dismiss them without a few comparative and particular observations.

At that time the lands of Newsham would be unenclosed, and a great portion occupied as pasture. The sum then paid to the Earl of Northumberland for tythe for corn and lambs was £5. The tythes of Newsham had belonged to the monks of Tynemouth, and were then farmed at 20s. These with the other possessions of the monastery were demised to Thomas, Earl of Northumberland, by Queen Mary, for 21 years, from 1560, at the yearly rent of £53 3s. 4d. In the 12th year of Elizabeth the Earl, being attached to the

Catholic religion, joined in the memorable confederacy, and, August, 1572, was beheaded at York.

The same year the Queen granted the same possessions to the Earl's younger brother, Sir Henry Percy, and his son Henry, for life, and the life of the survivor, and to Thomas, son of Sir Henry: yielding to the crown £165 11s. 5d. annually. These possessions remained in the Percy family till 1632, when the last of the grantees died. After various other changes these tithes have become equally divided between the Duke of Northumberland and Sir M. W. Ridley. And the tithes which in the days of the monks yielded a rent of one pound are now worth £200, or 40 times as much as John Ogle paid.

The superior money value of the ox, as compared with that of the cow, was doubtless attributable to the fact of the former being used for draught purposes. There is not a single horse upon the Bebside farm, and, though the inventory contains a pair of horse-harrows, yet it is highly probable that the use of the horse for such a purpose was an extraordinary affair, and those at News-ham would chiefly be retained for the saddle. The coney nets indicate that the links then swarmed with rabbits, as they continued to do down to the present century. The ware hacks are strong evidence that the agriculturalists of that day appreciated the value (for the purposes of manure) of the sea-weed periodically cast upon the beach during stormy weather. Bows, arrows, steel caps, lances, and spears, bring before us the ancient weapons of warfare, which had not yet been superseded by firearms, and now almost call up a smile

when contrasted with the perfection to which, in our day, we have carried the art of killing our species. In a few hours we can pile a hecatomb such as our forefathers would have required weeks to accomplish. The eldest son had his father's best suit of apparel willed to him with the same formality as though the issues of a kingdom depended on the transaction; but what should we in our day think to witness the heir of a noble sire disporting himself in the habiliments of his departed father! In the reign of Elizabeth, a gentleman's costume comprised the large trunk hose, long-waisted doublet, short cloak, hat, band and feather, and shoes with roses. The term "hose" continued to be applied to the entire vestment from the waist to the feet, and were made of silk or velvet; the doublet or jacket was still more costly, and was stuffed or quilted. The cloaks were cut according to the Spanish, French, or Dutch styles, and were of silk, cloth, velvet, or taffeta, and of every possible colour. Then there is an iron chimley in the inventory. The fire at this period, and for a century afterwards, was kindled upon the hearth-stone, which was laid level with the floor; and that it was indeed *a fire* is abundantly evident from the wide chimley ranges yet to be seen in some very old houses. Occasionally, however, an iron grate was used by the higher classes, and it is this grate they term a chimley. Unlike our modern fire grates, it was not a fixture, but a convenience which might be moved from one room to another. The iron chimley was so important an article of furniture that it was frequently entailed by will upon son after son in succession, along with the Flanders chest and

over-sea' coverlid. William Brown, the tailor, has a modest little account due to him of thirteen and fourpence. This is the first tradesman whose name comes down to us in connection with the neighbourhood. Where a suit of apparel went with an estate there would not be need for many tailors. Perhaps William was *the* tailor, literally, as he is described, and himself performed all the parish required in this line. John Ogle would likely practice the thrift of his times—buy his own materials, and get Brown and his assistants to come to Newsham to make them up, or “whip the cat,” as the term went. The amount for servants' wages bespeaks a very large establishment. Two farms would require a very considerable number of labourers as ploughmen, herds, &c. There were forty-two milk cows, for the milking of which and carrying forward the operations of the dairy, in converting so large a quantity of milk into butter and cheese, many hands would be needed; these would be still further augmented by the domestics necessarily maintained by a person of his rank and wealth. The wages paid to servants at that time in Newcastle, according to an item in the inventory of Cuthbert Ellison, were not large. He has “owing to his man-servant, due at Candlemas, 19s. 8d.; to two maid-servants, for their half-year's wages, 12s. 6d. each.” Assuming that £36 9s. represent a half-year's wages, if reckoned at the Newcastle rate, it will show Mr. Ogle to have maintained a very large establishment.

Sanitary considerations did not trouble the minds of those whose circumstances placed them far beyond the pinchings of poverty, hence we have no less than ten

beds in three rooms, and four of these beds honoured with a location in the *parlour*. The male servants would sleep in the lofts of the places in which the cattle were housed, a custom prevalent in the county till only very recently. No article of either glass* or earthenware occurs in the inventory. Men of Mr. Ogle's position used plates and dishes made of pewter, and the value of his service of that plate amounts to £2 14s. 4d. Even in noble families two persons commonly used one plate between them. Forks had not been invented, and instead of them all classes of the community used their fingers. It was accordingly a part of the etiquette of the table to employ the fingers so delicately as not to soil them to any great extent. Ladies were especially enjoined, when eating off the same plate with their neighbour, to turn the choicest pieces towards him, and not to select the nicest and finest for themselves. Pewter long kept its place. About sixty years ago might be seen on the dresser shelves of old householders a goodly array of well-polished pewter plate, but fallen into disuse, and then kept only for show. The study reveals its former occupant—the mass priest. It had become a place for the safe custody of John Ogle's ready cash, but among all his effects there is no indication of the existence of a book. Those were not the days wherein

* The glass-making art, so far as this country is concerned, dates back to the fifteenth century. In 1621 Venice was the "Queen of glass-making cities;" and there "the art was so highly valued that every one who practised it was esteemed a gentleman *ipse artis* (for the art's sake). In this land, we learn from Howell's letters, "the last gentleman glass blower who practised his profession at Sir Matthew White Ridley's works, in Newcastle-on-Tyne, was named Henzell. He was always attended by a boy, whose duty it was to hand the gentleman his stick when he was about to walk in state from one part of the glass house to another!"

"the schoolmaster was abroad," and books were of no utility in a family, the members of which had not acquired the art of reading.

The names of persons occurring in the inventory, where no residence is given, embrace most of the persons of any consequence in the parishes of Earsdon and Horton. Thomas Preston, William Harbottle, John Spring, and John Spring, jun., were freeholders living in Coupén. Of the three Delavals named in the will, Robert possessed the estate and resided at Delaval castle; Peter and Joshua were cousins of Robert, and probably farmers on the estate. Oliver Ogle lived at Burradon; and Thomas Swan, of Seaton, was an ancestor of the Swans who continued to farm on the Delaval estate down to the present century.

Lancelot Cramlington, mentioned in John Ogle's will, married his daughter Mary. He was probably a younger brother of Thomas Cramlington's father, and lived at Blyth in 1561. His name is appended with that of John Ogle to the articles of agreement for defence against the moss-troopers. Lancelot Cramlington, of Blyth-nook, gentleman, was interred at Earsdon, September 14th, 1602. Mabel, his daughter, was married at the same place to Mr. Christopher Pryn, on the 19th June, 1603. In 1628, Thomas Cramlington, of Blyth-nook, and Lancelot his son and heir, held one messuage and forty acres of land with their appurtenances, in Newsham, late the property of George Cramlington. Rachael, wife of John Cramlington, of Blyth, died in 1648; and fourteen years later John was resident at Backworth, where his name occurs in

the parish books as vestryman, and whence the family subsequently removed to Earsdon. The late Henry Cramlington, an alderman of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was the representative of this family. He was three times mayor of Newcastle, and died at Birling, Warkworth, May 22nd, 1844,—the last of this ancient family.

Robert Cramlington succeeded to the Newsham estate in 1624, and his name occurs in connection with a remarkable circumstance which took place in Blyth harbour in 1636—he was a loyalist, and from some cause which I have not been able to ascertain, he got into trouble with the leaders of the Commonwealth, and his estate was sequestered after his death, in 1652. He was buried at Earsdon on the 23rd of January; Grace, his widow, on the 22nd February; and Dorothy, their daughter, on the 10th March, 1650. After this the mansion at Newsham was occupied by a member of the Loraine family.

December 29th, 1656, witnessed the baptism, at Earsdon, of John, son of Capt. Anthony Loraine, of Newsham; the same ordinance being performed on the person of Elizabeth, their daughter, February 7th, 1658; and on March 7th, ten years later, Robert, son of John Loraine (brother of Anthony, perhaps) was buried.

Spearman says that after the sequestration of the estate of Newsham it was purchased by the city of London. Shortly after the Restoration, however, it again came into the possession of the family. In 1663, Philip Cramlington is returned in the county rate book as the sole proprietor of the township of Newsham, then rated at £200 per annum. His name is likewise inserted

by Blome in his catalogue of the gentry of Northumberland, in 1673.

In 1696 Newsham passed into other hands, becoming the property of Thomas Ratcliffe, a colonel in the army, brother of Francis first earl of Derwentwater. He was non-resident. Madame Errington and George Errington, catholics, and probably members of the Errington family living at Beaufront, resided at Newsham* in 1706. Colonel Ratcliffe died unmarried, and devised Newsham with his other estates of Plessey, Shotton, and Nafferton, to his niece Lady Mary Ratcliffe during her life, and after her decease to James, Earl of Derwentwater, and his heirs, on the attainder of the latter for the part he took in the unfortunate rebellion of 1715, the whole were vested in the commissioners of forfeited estates, who advertised them for sale at their office in the Inner Temple, July 11th, 1723. The following particulars were circulated on the occasion:

NAMES OF TENANTS, AND AMOUNT OF RENTS.

Edward Byers, for the Demesne farm, 40l., West farm, 40l	£80	0	0
Francis Welton, Linkhouse farm.....	30	0	0

* This mansion is still standing, and has long been occupied as a farmhouse by the Wilson family. It presents a fine example of the dwellings of the lesser gentry of 300 years ago. Its massive walls, five feet thick, and stout oaken beams, give evidence that the builder intended it to serve more than one generation of tenants. To see it is well worth a journey to Newsham. It has little outward attraction, but the interior examined with a reference to the Inventory of John Ogle, will amply repay the labour.

An anecdote in relation to the rebellion of the Earl of Derwentwater, continued to be told till the beginning of the present century, to the effect that Madame Errington, then living in the mansion at Newsham, sympathising with the Earl's purpose, entrusted Charley Byers with a large amount of gold coin to carry to the Earl to assist in his desperate enterprise; but tradition has it that Charley kept it for his own use! And as the cash had been entrusted to him for a treasonable purpose, Madame Errington had no remedy at law. Charley Byers was a well-known individual, a member of an old Blyth family now extinct.

William Silvertop, Blyth Nook farm	£40	0	0
John Clark, Cuthbertson's farm	38	0	0
John Harkness and John Chicken, Great West farm....	45	0	0
Philip Jubb, a house and close	2	0	0
Richard Nicholson, the fishery	5	10	0
James Blackett, Eleanor Potts, and John Ward, each a cottage at	0	5	0
Edward Watts, a coney warren, with 15 acres of land	35	0	0
Robert Wright and John Spearman, for staith	100	0	0

The Estate was purchased by MATTHEW WHITE, Esq., of Blagdon.

William Silvertop was the son of William Silvertop, of Stella, and younger brother of Albert Silvertop of the same place, ancestor of the Silvertops of Minsteracres. This family is said to have come originally from Blyth; but the only occurrence of the name in the registry of Earsdon is in connection with Backworth, at the other extremity of the parish. In 1604, Robert, son of Robert Gold, *alias* Silvertop, was baptized. William Silvertop would reside in an old house built by the Rateliffes, opposite the Star and Garter. The Blyth Nook Farm consisted of those fields now in grass, and not included in any of the present farms. He had also a farm on Ratcliffe's estate at Plessy. In the year 1735, I find a William Bowman debited with the sum of eight shillings and twopence, which had been paid to a person for carrying William Silvertop's books to Newcastle. William's library, we presume, must have been very extensive. At a period when a cart, with two horses and the driver, could be hired for four shillings a day, eight and twopence for carriage indicates a great weight of books. We may fairly give Mr. Silvertop the credit of being the first Blyth man who enjoyed the advantage of a good library. It is not a little curious that when the first Napoleon was in exile at Elba, George Silvertop, of Minsteracres, paid him a visit, when, in the course of

conversation, Buonaparte talked of Blyth with such a fulness of information about the locality that Mr. Silver-top was surprised to find that Bounaparte knew much more about Blyth than he did who lived so near to it. Bounaparte's information about Blyth had probably been obtained when forming his plans for the invasion of England. It was known that he had agents employed, during the short peace of Amiens, taking the soundings of the harbours and coasts of Great Britain. And certainly Blyth sands would afford great facilities for the landing of an army. There may have been more reason for the arrangements then made to carry the women and children into the interior, in case of an invasion, than the public were then aware of.

That the population of Blyth and Newsham in the seventeenth century must have been scanty is sufficiently proved by the paucity of entries in the parish registers. But that it was so small in 1723, as would appear from the foregoing list of tenants, we are not prepared to assert. There were only twelve families paying rent, but in addition to those no doubt there would be many who paid no rent—at least not to the proprietor. The farmers would each have hinds living on their holdings, and Wright and Spearman of necessity must have employed several men in the shipment of coals at their staiths, the £100 rent paid by them including the houses of their workmen.

Of the twelve families only one has male representatives living in the township at present, Edward Watts, the then tenant of the coney warren. Our respected townswoman Miss Ogle is the great grand-

daughter of Philip Jubb; the family of the Jubbs were resident in Blyth in 1663.

The parish rates in the chapelry of Earsdon were levied in proportion to the number of certain farms in each township. Of these Newsham contained six and two-thirds; Earsdon, eight; Seghill, ten; Burradon, five; Seaton, eleven; Hartley, nine; Holywell, six and three-quarters. There is an example in the Newsham and Blyth parish accounts, of that township contributing its share of a church-rate according to the above rule: "April 27th, 1832, Paid John Cuthbert, church-cess, for a wall at Earsdon, on six and two-third farms at £2 0s. 2d.—£13 7s. 9d."



CHAPTER II.

History of Blyth Nook. Ancient Stobhill. Origin of the Name. Precautions against the Moss-troopers. Extent and continuance of border-thieving. Measures of defence. Dunkirk privateer and Dutch ship of war. Scots army landed at Blyth. Admiralty map. Custom House.

IN 1208 we met with the first allusion to what is now the town of Blyth. It was then termed "the snook;" and on again meeting with it it is called "Blyth Nook." This name was descriptive of the form and situation of the ground on which it stood. Blyth continued to be a nook until the enclosure of Cowpen Quay. We may realise what was the situation of the town in olden time if we imagine the site of Cowpen Quay and the ground at Croften Mills to be simply a slake, as is now that part lying between the railway and Waterloo bridge, and that at high water there was a vast expanse of water stretching from the bend in the river above the High Pans, covering what is now Cowpen Quay, the site of the houses at Waterloo bridge, the old Plessey waggon way, and the gardens between the Folly and Crofton, down to nearly the Far Pit, so that there was only the ancient Stob Hill and a narrow strip of link separating the tide in the river from the tide in the gote-side, and thus leaving the town standing upon a nook, or corner, in the river. Hence it is called Blyth Nook.

Dr. Dodd, in his review of the former volume in the *Newcastle Journal*, says, "No local history is complete,

we fancy, without the etymology of the names, an account of which it proposes to give. The author does not allude to that of Blyth; and we sympathise with him in this, because it is a difficult one. Four rivers in England enjoy the name of Blyth. It is, besides, an element in the names of a parish and a town. The name is, therefore, a general one, and means something. What is this signification? Now *elbe*, from the Latin *alba*, means white; and *bl* is, in all probability, a fragment of the corruption of *alb*. In Anglo-Saxon, *yth* means a flood or wave; and, by a slight metaphor, it may signify river." If this be so, then Blyth signifies "white river." With all proper deference to the learned Doctor, we venture to give our opinion that he has not succeeded in solving the difficulty said to belong to the etymology of Blyth. It certainly cannot mean white river; for there is not the slightest approach to whiteness in any part of its course. We opine that the good old Saxon word "blithe," meaning gay, airy, cheerful, gladsome, exactly describes the characteristics of the river in the main portion of its course, but specially from Stannington to Bedlington iron works. In 1200, the bridge at Stannington is called the bridge of Blye, the next time I meet with the name it is Blithe, then it becomes Blith, then Blythe, and now the spelling has long been established Blyth.

The links and sandhills at the south end of the town, used to be the favourite resort of the population, and formed a kind of people's park in former times. The change that has passed over the entire scene is remarkable,—reducing what had for generations been a pleasant

place of resort to a barren and unsightly waste. The eminence on which the battery stood was of much greater extent than at present. Then there was a continuation of low hillocks from the Ropery corner to the ancient Stob Hill. The first portion of these hillocks was called Rosy-hill, from its being covered with bushes of wild briar, and was in summer completely clad with roses, which gave colour to the hills. And the rest of the links were beautified with clusters of the many tiny flowers common to the situation, such as rest arrow, ladies' bed straw, ladies' fingers, geranium crane's bill, blue bells, yarrow, &c. The whole surface was unbroken, and in fine weather afforded a much-frequented lounging place, to both old and young. The ancient Stob Hill, or, as it would now be called, the Flagstaff Hill, was an immense accumulation of sand, blown up into a hill by the action of the wind in the course of ages in the far past. About 1820 breaches began to be made in it, and the strong north-west winds carried it away with surprising speed, so that in the course of ten or twelve years it had become a thing of the past. Its removal has entirely changed the aspect of the locality.

Formerly all ingress to the town from the direction of Cowpen was suspended at each rising of the tide; and even down to the building of Waterloo bridge, in 1841, carts, &c., coming from Cowpen when the tide was full had to make a circuit by way of Crofton bridge, and enter the town by the Plessey waggon way. After Cowpen Quay was enclosed pedestrians could reach the town, except on extraordinarily high tides, by passing along a mound known as the "chalk dyke," and then crossing

the "flanker" by a long narrow wooden foot-bridge, stretching from Cowpen Quay to the ballast hills.

Blyth Nook is mentioned in an old border law, 1552, which enjoined that Shotton-dyke-nook should be watched nightly by two men, inhabitants of Shotton and Hartford; another watch to be kept at the north side of the Down-hill, with two men of Horton and Bebside; and the watch at Lorakin-hill to be kept by two men of Blyth Nook and Cowpen. The first two places directed to be watched still retain their names; but we have no guide to Lorakin-hill. Indeed there does not seem to be a place in either the township of Cowpen or Newsham that can be called a hill, unless it refers to some of the sand hills.

George Morton was setter and searcher of the three watches, and Liall Fenwick and John Bell overseers. The object of the watches at Shotton and Down-hill was evidently to prevent the thieves getting into the country on the south of the Blyth, a district well stocked with cattle, and for that reason very liable to a visit from the freebooters. Bedlington being an important town, that circumstance, in conjunction with the absence of fords, would render it a rather dangerous experiment to cross that part part of the river; but by making a detour through Bedlingtonshire, by the south of the Wansbeck, and coming along the links, they, at the right time of tide, could easily cross either by the ford at Buck's-hill mill or at the shoal opposite the ancient Stob-hill.

All these precautionary measures were rendered necessary by the predatory habits of the moss-troopers. It seems very strange to us to be told that hundreds of

people in the western part of this county continued for many generations to live by plundering their neighbours, and that all the power of the government was unable to destroy the evil. But so it was. This state of things continued so long, and operated so injuriously in retarding the improvement and prosperity of this part of the country, that it really demands more than a mere passing allusion, and unfortunately there is no lack of materials for this purpose. It were easy to fill volumes from the most authentic sources, but it will suffice for our present object to adduce a few facts illustrative of the state of affairs at the period referred to.

In a letter written to Cardinal Wolsey, then Bishop of Durham, by the Bishop of Carlisle, dated Newcastle, 17th of June, 1522, he says, "the Lord Ross, Sir William Paxton, Sir Richard Ellercar, and Sir Richard Tempest, departed from Newcastle this morning with five hundred men to Alnwick, where the Lord Dacre meets them. The Scotch under the Duke of Albany, we hear, are coming to the borders, *but there is more theft, more extortion, by the English thieves, than there is by all the Scots in Scotland.* There is no man, that does not abide in a stronghold, that hath any cattle or moveables in security throughout the bishopric, and from the bishopric till we come within eight miles of Carlisle. And all Northumberland likewise, Hexhamshire worst of all, for in Hexham itself, every market day, there come fourscore or a hundred thieves, and the poor man and the gentleman too seeth their goods, and the men that did rob them, but dare not complain of them by name, nor say one word to them. The thieves take all

their cattle and horses, and their corn as they carry it to sow or to the mill to grind. And at their houses they bid them deliver what they have, or they will be fired and burnt. By these proceedings not being looked to all the country goeth to waste. We want, for the borders about Carlisle, one thousand bows and as many sheaves of arrows."

In a book written by Grey, called a Survey of Newcastle, 1549, speaking of the borderers, he says, "There are many dales, the chief of which are Tynedale and Redesdale, a country that William the Conqueror did not subdue, retaining to this day their ancient laws and customs. These highlanders are famous for thieving; they are all bred up and live by theft; they come down from these dales to the low country, and carry away horses and cattle so cunningly that it will be hard for any to get them or their cattle, except they be acquainted with some master thief, who for some money may help them to their stolen goods." He adds, "there are many of them brought to the gaol at Newcastle, and at the assizes are condemned and hanged, sometimes to the number of twenty or thirty at a time." So that we are not to suppose that the authorities took no measures to repress those disorders; various means were used, but without any permanent result. In 1524 Lord Surrey sent Sir Ralph Fenwick with eighty horsemen into Tynedale, to apprehend Will Ridley, a noted chief of the freebooters; but Will Charlton, another master thief, hearing that Sir Ralph had come into the dale, hastily gathered his followers, of whom it is said he had two hundred, who were bound and sworn upon a book

to take his part at all times. With these he attacked Sir Ralph, and not only put him from his purpose of taking Ridley, but chased him out of Tynedale; and, as the narrator says, very much to his reproach.*

Military measures failing, the cardinal tried what the thunders of the church could accomplish in restraining these wild mountaineers, for those men, though living in the habitual breach of all the laws of the decalogue, yet considered themselves good Christians, and attended to all the ritual observances of the church. But the cardinal effected as little by his interdict as did Sir Ralph with his fourscore horsemen, as appears by a communication to the cardinal. It says, After the receipt of your grace's order, we caused all the churches of Tynedale to be interdicted. This instrument of terror in the hands of the clergy of the Church of Rome was calculated to strike the senses in the highest degree, and to operate on the superstitious minds of the people. By it a stop was immediately put to divine service, and to the administration of all the sacraments but baptism. The dead were refused Christian burial, and were thrown in the ditches and on the highways, without the usual rites or any funeral solemnity. Marriage was celebrated in the churchyards, and the people prohibited the use of meat as in times of public penance. But these unruly sons of the church were not to be frightened into habits

* Since the above was prepared for the press, the writer has enjoyed the high gratification of viewing, in the picture gallery of Wallington Hall, a fine painting illustrative of these lawless times. The lady of one of the chief moss-troopers is represented as serving to her spouse, amidst his followers at the festive board, a dish containing a pair of spurs—an intimation perfectly understood to mean that it was time for him and his followers to take horse and make a raid into the low country, and harry some cattle-fold, and so replenish her means of housekeeping.

of industry and honesty by an interdict. They boldly disobeyed it, and set it aside. They got a Scotch friar, says the cardinal's informant, to minister to them their communion after his fashion, and Ector Charlton, one of their captains, received the parson's dues and appropriated them as he thought right. The cardinal's informant concludes by stating that "the interdict still remaineth in force, and it is good it should do so still. We wish your grace would find means that all the sacraments should be denied them in Scotland, which would sore affright them; otherwise they will lightly esteem this interdiction." But we are not to suppose the services that were now being interdicted had been performed by a class of godly priests. A Bishop of Durham describes the priests of Tynedale and Redesdale as being themselves thieves, and chaplains of landowners who were thieves; as too unlettered to read the service books, and as persons of scandalous lives.

Unfortunately these lawless habits were not confined to the people living in the dales. In the Survey of 1550 it is unequivocally asserted that "the whole county of Northumberland is much given to riot, specially the young gentlemen or headsmen, and divers of them do theft and other great offences." In Carey's Memoirs it is stated, "Amongst other malefactors were two gentlemen thieves, who robbed and took purses from travellers on the highways—a theft never heard of in those parts before. I got them betrayed, and sent them to Newcastle, and there they were hanged."

The watches thus appointed were a portion of a scheme of defence against the moss-troopers, that was devised by

a commission appointed for the purpose, the articles of which were afterwards agreed to and signed by all the people of rank, property, and influence in the county.

The measures of defence which they entered into a formal agreement to adopt throw considerable light upon the state of the county at that period. The lands were all open and unenclosed. This was considered to afford great facilities to the borderers in carrying out their depredations. The aspect of the country then must have differed widely from its present one. In the midst of moor-lands or extensive woods, there was every here-and-there the large open pasture and cultivated fields of the village; instead of each farmer's land lying altogether as at present they were all intermixed. There was one large cultivated field, where each tenant held his own portion of arable land, under the name of "ox-gangs:" these were without hedge or any division, save a strip of grass which bordered each tenant's holding, and beyond that was the pasture where the cattle fed in common under the charge of the village herd.

The first measure they devised was to defend the towns villages, &c., by enclosing the adjoining lands and dividing them into small closes or crofts of not more than two acres each. The roads were to be made narrow and crooked that the enemy may be met at corners, where a few men may be able to resist and annoy them by the bow. The enclosure to be well defended by a ditch four feet deep and six feet broad, and planted with a double quickset hedge and some ashes. The second thing to be done was that all the town fields for tillage, meadows, and pasture, were to be severed from each other, so that

every owner or farmer's land was to lay together, and hedged and ditched in like manner. After these there were directions for enclosing commons and repairing castles, and the agreement is followed by a schedule of all the lords, freeholders, &c., in the county, that have agreed to the execution of the articles, which state, "such of them as can write have hereunto subscribed their names; and such other as cannot write have hereunto set their mark, and caused their names hereafter to be written." And of the one hundred and forty-six persons of rank, and property, and influence, who signed the above document, only fifty-four could write their names. Among those who could not write their names were John Ogle, of Newsham, and his son-in-law, Lancelot Cramlington, of Blyth Nook. Now, when John Ogle could not write—whose father was a knight, and his mother a Delaval—what would be the state of education among the poor? Indeed at that period it is doubtful whether there would be a single individual in Newsham or Blyth, who could either read or write. The state of education may be inferred from the circumstance, that in 1578, there were only twenty school masters in the whole of Northumberland, North Durham, and Berwick-upon-Tweed included; of these eleven were located in Newcastle, three in Berwick, two in Alnwick, two in Morpeth, one in Corbridge, and one at Woodhorne—18 in fact for the four market towns, with only two for the county. Martin Garnet, who was elected to serve as a burgess for Berwick, in parliament, in 1572, "with five shillings sterling per day" for his wages, and frequently represented the town afterwards, was unable to write his name.

We have now to relate a remarkable breach of international law that took place in Blyth harbour. It was the case of a Holland ship-of-war pursuing a Dunkirk privateer into the harbour, where they took forcible possession of her, and afterwards took her away. We have a minute account of the transaction in two documents by parties who witnessed the outrage. The first is in the form of a declaration made before Sir John Delaval, knight, justice of the peace, &c., on the 12th day of August, 1635, by Robert Cramlington, esq., James Sutton, and George Fultherp, all of Newsham. The second account is in a letter written by William Carnaby, of Bedlington, to the Bishop of Durham. The event occurred during the herring season in the above year. At that time the Dutch were the leading naval power in Europe, and carried on their fishing trade with great spirit, wherever fish were to be found, on all the coasts of northern Europe. Dunkirk at this period belonged to Spain, and Spain and Holland being at war, the privateer in question had been fitted out at that port and furnished with letters of marque to make prey of the Dutch fishing vessels. Knowing where the Dutchmen would be plying their trade, the privateer had come down to this coast, where they committed enormous havoc among the Dutch fishing busses, having captured eighty, all of which they had either burnt or sunk. A Dutch ship-of-war, though too late to prevent the wholesale destruction of their fishing fleet, came upon the privateer, who, to avoid being captured by her powerful enemy, ran for shelter into Blyth harbour in the expectation that they would be safe in a neutral

port. The arrival of this vessel manned with thirty-six men, and three guns, had produced quite a sensation in the little port. Mr. Cramlington was brought from Newsham. He went to the strange ship to ascertain her character and the purpose of her coming into port. They showed him their papers to prove that they belonged to Dunkirk and had letters of marque from the King of Spain, and admitted that they had run into port to escape from their enemy, a Holland man-of-war, that was in sight, lying before the haven. While Cramlington was conversing with the people the Dutchman came away for the harbour, and proceeded as far as he was able to come for water, and fired his guns at the privateer, which came near, but did not hit her. The Dunkirkers finding that their pursuers were bent upon carrying matters to extremes, tried to pacify them by liberating ten Dutch fishermen who were confined in the hold as prisoners. When set free these men went down the shore opposite the other ship and beckoned to their friends, who sent a boat to them, and after some talk with the prisoners went back to their ship, and immediately manned their long boat with some thirty men armed with muskets and other weapons. The boat then proceeded up the harbour to attack the privateer; seeing this the Dunkirkers opened fire upon the boat which made them retire and go back to their own ship, but only to return with greater force. This time they landed fifty men, armed with "muskets, halberts, and swords," who put themselves in military array, in three ranks, and so marched near a half-mile along shore, to the great terror of the inhabitants, and came to the side of the haven, and

began to fire on the privateer, which was laid at the north side of the harbour; but finding that the firing of small arms was producing little effect, they took possession of some Blyth fishing boats laying at hand, and in these proceeded to cross the river. The Dunkirkers perceiving this deserted their ship, and fled along the links. The Dutch seized the ship; but not content with this achievement, about thirty of them were sent after their flying enemies. After pursuing them for two miles, sounding a trumpet and alarming all the countryside, they overtook and robbed divers of them. Ten of the privateer's men ran forward till they obtained shelter in Bedlington; a part of their pursuers still followed, but Mr. Carnaby was able to muster a force sufficient to apprehend and put them in prison. In the meantime the Dutch ship went to sea, taking with them the captured privateer. They continued at anchor in the roads awaiting the return of the men who had pursued the fugitives; but after learning what had befallen them at Bedlington, the captain wrote a letter to Mr. Carnaby demanding the restoration of the men. Mr. Carnaby engaged to inform him what course would be taken by the evening of the following day, and wrote to the bishop giving an account of the transaction, and urgently pressed the bishop to consider some course to be taken in the affair, "seeing," he says, "that the whole shire is in great fear and great trouble; and at considerable charge with the keep of these twenty men." Besides, he urges, it is feared that the Hollanders may come on shore with their soldiers and take away the men by force. Our information about this affair ends

with Mr. Carnaby's letter, so we cannot tell how Bedlington got rid of its troublesome visitors.

The Dutch were carrying themselves at this time with great insolence in conducting the herring fishery on our coast. They sent their ships-of-war with their fishing-smacks or busses, and by the fire of their guns drove the English and Scots from their fishing grounds on their own coast. For a time the Dutch had paid a certain sum yearly to king James, for the privilege of taking herrings off the coast, but they had now not only ceased to make these payments, but had encroached in other places, and had attempted to establish as a point of international law, that the seas and every part of them, wherever salt water flowed, were free to them and other nations, without any limitation as to coast lines, &c. The audacious conduct of the Dutch in hostilely entering the little port of Blyth, may have hastened the government of king Charles to take measures to bring them to a better behaviour. In the following March, a fleet of sixty sail were got together, which, under the command of the Earl of Northumberland, seized and sunk a few of the Dutch busses in the northern seas. After this assertion of dominion over the circumjacent seas, the Dutch hastened to acknowledge the right of our island over its own bays, friths, and shores, and agreed to pay Charles £30,000 a-year for liberty to fish there.

Nine years after the Dutch outrage, the quite little port was again disturbed, this time by the arrival of a Scottish fleet, with ordnance and supplies for the Scots army then besieging Newcastle. The civil war was now raging between Charles I and the parliament, when in

January, 1644, a Scottish force for a second time entered Northumberland, and soon the whole county fell into the possession of the invaders, excepting Newcastle, and the castle of Tynemouth. Newcastle was at this time well fortified, and after an ineffectual summons, old Leslie crossed the river and marched upon Sunderland. He afterwards proceeded south and joined Lord Fairfax under the walls of York. After sharing in the victory of Marston Moor, he returned to the siege of Newcastle. A pamphlet printed in London, by Matthew Walbank, 1644, has the following paragraph, under date July 3rd, "Eight o'clock last night news came hither (believed to be true and certain) that an army of Scots is come into Northumberland, to Blyth-nook, of about 12,000 men, and that they have already taken Morpeth castle; and the Scots lords, and Colonel Clavering with them, have rested themselves at Newcastle." In one point the above is incorrect, instead of the Scots taking Morpeth castle, Colonel Clavering, of Callaly castle, a stout royalist took it from the Scots. Spalding, who wrote a book about the operations of the Scottish army, says, "there was a fight about Morpat in June, where divers of our Scottish foot soldiers were overcome by the borderers, and strippit out of their clothes, and arms, and sent hame nakit." The borderers who had so dealt with their prisoners, would be the followers of Clavering, who had raised at his own charge a regiment of horse and another of foot, to serve king Charles. He died a few weeks after this of fever, brought on by fatigue during the retreat after the defeat of Marston Moor.

In 1665, the year of the great plague in London,

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England and Holland were engaged in a fierce naval warfare; and such was the strength of the Dutch navy that it was deemed necessary to have an armed force along the coast of Northumberland. Colonel Strother, commander of the military force of the county, in a letter addressed to the Bishop of Durham, acknowledges the receipt of the command of the bishop to go to Blyth-nook, but states that he had been previously ordered by the Lords Lieutenant of Northumberland to send the county militia to the sea coast, and had in accordance with the order already sent a company of the militia to Blyth-nook, and the rest of the regiment were stationed between Seaton Delaval and Warkworth, and the horse occupied the coast from Warkworth to Bambrough. He informs the bishop further, that he had on the previous Monday got the militia company of Norham and Islandshire together, and at the urgent request of the inhabitants had placed them at Holy Island, the people there being sorely afraid that as there were pirates haunting the coast, they might some night send men on shore and fire the town.

Blyth-nook continued to be a very insignificant place till about the commencement of the last century. By an Admiralty map of Blyth harbour, made from surveys between 1682 and 1689, there are only a few houses indicated where Blyth now stands; and tradition says that four or five cottages that stood behind the church, and that were pulled down within the last thirty years, constituted the Blyth of the seventeenth century. According to the map referred to there are no quays shown on the south bank of the river. There is the Bishop's

Quay, at the link-end, named on the map Blyth Quay; North Blyth is marked as Blyth Pans; and the wide space above Blyth Pans is marked Blyth Harbour. An examination I have been kindly permitted to make of the church registers at Earsdon confirms this view of the insignificance of Blyth to the end of the sixteenth century, as for several years together there are neither births, marriages, nor deaths registered for Blyth.*

At the first sight it seems strange that the Nook had been so long neglected as a place for conducting the trade of the port. In 1208 it had a salt pans and a fishery; and that 500 years afterwards, when improvement had been going on everywhere else, it should be found so little altered appears difficult to account for. But the fact that the Nook was nearly surrounded twice-a-day by the tide, and at all times by an almost impassable slake, would, with the imperfect modes then in use for the transit of coals, render it imperative to resort to other places on the river that were more easy of access. Hence ships loaded at Coupén Pool, Buck's-hill, and North Blyth.

The pedigree of the Plessis family contains the record of a bargain with Magaret, the widow of Richard de Plessis, made in 1349, with Rodger de Widdrington,

* After the former edition went to press I discovered that in the first half of the last century many Blyth families buried their dead at Horton: no doubt the distance being so much less than to Earsdon would lead to the practice. I give a few names that belonged to old Blyth families. 1740.—Eleanor, wife of John Swan, and Sarah, wife of Edward Fairfoot, all of Blyth. 1741.—Cuthbert, son of Henry Paton. 1745.—Several members of the Moss family. 1749.—Wm. Atkinson, surgeon, of Blyth; and several of the Callenders. 1751.—One of the Sibbets. 1751.—Mark Renwick, a shoemaker, from Morpeth, who was drowned at Blyth, July 5th, was buried at Horton. 1762.—Edward Fairfoot, of Blyth. At this date the church-yard at Blyth was set apart for the burial of the dead.

for a house and maintenance for her life, which shows at how early a date sea coal had been worked in the mines at Plessy. This lady had probably been occupying the manor house up to that time. Widdrington, amongst other things, covenanted to allow her £20 a year, and to build her a house within "the manor of Plessy:" to consist of a hall, a chamber, a pantry, a buttery, a brewhouse, and a byre for six cows and their calves. The covenant for fuel to be used in the house was, that she should yearly have ten wain loads of peat, and liberty to pull as much ling as she pleased, on the wastes of Plessy and Shotton, besides two chalders (six fothers) of sea coal at the mines of Plessy. Pytlaw and Pytlaw Strother are names which occur in deeds respecting this estate made in the time of Henry the 3rd—1216 to 1266. These facts show that the coal trade of the Port of Blyth had a very early beginning indeed, as whatever sea coal was sent from Plessy would be shipped on the Blyth: this accords with all that by tradition and otherwise has come down to us about the early trade of the port.

Plessy Colliery, in 1663, was in possession of Charles Brandling, and until a railway was made from Plessy to Blyth the quantity of coal sent by the mode then in use must have been very limited. Macaulay, in the fourth volume of his *History of England*, p.321, says, that among the many joint stock companies got up in 1692 was a Blyth Coal Company. Whether the project ever came to anything we have not been able to learn, but certainly about this period Blyth made a decided start in the race of improvement. At the end of thirty years

Blyth and Plessy are connected by a railway, quays are built, and a Custom House established, and the Nook has become the centre for the trade of the Port of Blyth.

The first book kept at the Custom House is in the possession of Sir M. W. Ridley, Bart., who has permitted me to avail myself of the valuable information it affords of the trade of the port at that period. It is a large book, and had been kept upon the plan of entering in three separate divisions of the book,—the coasters, the ships clearing over-sea, and the imports. There is also an account of the ships clearing at Cullercoats, which was then attached to the Port of Blyth-nook. The book commences with the coasting trade, and unfortunately the pages containing the first ten years are lost; the first entry remaining is in 1733. About half way through the book the entries for the over-sea trade begin; the first date is August 7th, 1723. The entries of imports, and the clearings at Cullercoats, commence at the same date. From August 7th, 1723, to August 6th, 1724, 78 vessels clear with coals for foreign ports. At this time the price of coals on ship-board was nine shillings per chaldron. The tax upon the chaldron was six shillings. It was divided into two portions—the first under the name of “the old subsidy;” the second as “the new duty.” Both were of the same amount,—three shillings each.

CHAPTER III.

The Ridley Family become connected with Blyth. Advertisement. Marshall's Family. George Marshall's poetry.—Extracts from "Cynthia and Leonora." Ship-building. Edmund Hannay. John Clarke. Smuggling. Robert Stoker. Camps. Grand Review. William Robinson. Former Shop-keeping. Great lack of house accommodation. Cowpen Colliery. Blyth united to the Township of Cowpen by Waterloo bridge and railroad. Blyth and its people at the close of the eighteenth century. Superstitions. Sheraton's parlour.

IN 1730 our information respecting the town becomes more full and precise. Richard and Nicholas Ridley are then conducting an extensive business as general merchants. Besides carrying on Plessy Colliery, and bringing the coal to Blyth for shipment, they had fourteen salt pans at work, producing more than a thousand tons of salt yearly. They had a raft-yard in what is now known as the factory-yard, where, besides selling timber and iron, they dealt largely in hops, and supplied these articles to all the adjacent country within ten or twelve miles. There were brick and tile works at what is still known as the Sheds and a Brewery behind Queen's-lane. There was a stone quarry in operation behind the Star and Garter, out of which was dug all the stone of which the old part of the town was built. There were lime kilns situated on a sort of creek, that extended from the boat dock to the Star and Garter, up which the small vessels came and delivered the cargoes of limestone they brought from the Durham coast. That this trade must have been extensive is proved by the fact that in one year coals to the value of £115 15s., at

4s. 6d. per chaldron, were used in lime-burning. At this time Mr. Nicholas Ridley lived at the Link-house, in the house where the Rev. Robt. Greenwood so long resided. He was the third son of Nicholas Ridley, who was twice Mayor of Newcastle. His son Nicholas was an envoy from England to Anne, Empress of Russia. He had an estate at Willimoteswicke; and died at the Link-house, June, 1751. A Captain Ridley lived at the Link-house in 1759. I find in that year an account paid Joseph Clark for hay delivered at the Link-house for Captain Ridley. An account is paid in 1766 for Major Ridley. This would be Richard Ridley, who died at Edinburgh in 1789; he had then attained the rank of colonel.

Mr. Francis Barrow is agent to the Ridleys, and all the establishments named above are under his general superintendence, with a salary of £52 per annum. He has under him his brother Edward, as manager of the raft-yard, at a salary of £15 a-year; and James Barnes and George Easterby overlook other departments at a salary of 9s. per week each. Matthew Tapley is the staithman. Mrs. Mary Harrison and John Adon keep public-houses. Mrs. Harrison's name frequently comes up in business transactions at this period, and appears to have been a person of "credit and renown." James Todrig and Garret Heckles are doing mason work. Francis Smith, John Lister, and James Cleghorn are blacksmiths. Thomas Brown and Charles Twizell are pilots. Richard Wheatley is a blacksmith at North Blyth.

From this time improvement seems to have gone very

slowly onwards. Attempts were made to win coal in what is still called the Pit Field, but without success. As yet there were no people in the town with capital to enter into other trades. The Ridleys had hitherto found capital to set a-going the several works we have named, and so provided employment for a considerable number of the labouring class. But wages were small: masons and carpenters 18d. a-day; an unskilled labourer had only 8d. a-day. Salaries, as we have seen, were equally low; and as the income of the bulk of the population would be at this low rate, capital must have accumulated very slowly.

The following advertisement, which appeared in the *Newcastle Journal*, January 7th, 1744, is an attempt to draw the attention of capitalists to Blyth:—

AT BLYTH, a Good Sea-port in Northumberland.—
 Good Convenience for carrying on any Trade, with liberty to build Warehouses, Granaries, and other things necessary. Also, a New Wind-mill, built with stone, and well-accustomed. A Fire stone Quarry, for Glass-house Furnaces. A Draw Kiln for burning Limestones. Two large Sheds for making Pan-tiles and stock Bricks, with a good seam of Clay for that purpose. Also, at Link-house, one mile from Blyth, a large New Malt-ing, well supplied with Water.

Enquire at Link-house aforesaid, or of Matthew Ridley, Esq., Newcastle.

We do not apprehend that this advertisement drew many capitalists to Blyth. George Marshall came to Blyth shortly after this time. He got the raft-yard into his hands, and he and his family held it for three-quarters of a century. He became a shipowner, and built the house now known as the Ridley Arms, for a family residence. His sons Mark and John were among the chief people in the town, and had several ships. Mark carried on the raft-yard, and John the ropery now

held by Mr. Watts. Mark was in a declining state of health when the great contested election of 1826 took place. He was induced to go to Alnwick to record his vote, but did not live to return; he died on his way at Felton. John had died some time before.

George Marshall had a third son named after himself. He left Blyth early in life to enter the sea service of the Honorable East India Company. He was a man of high character and considerable ability, but unsuccessful in his secular pursuits. In 1812 he published a volume of Poems, a quarto of 212 pages, to which is annexed a list of eighteen hundred subscribers of one guinea each. The principal poem is entitled "Cynthia and Leonora," and is descriptive of a voyage to and from the East Indies. He is also author of "Letters from an Elder to a Younger Brother." As the book is now rarely to be met with, I have annexed two specimens of his poetry, as a small memorial of a worthy townsman:

A PASSAGE FROM GEORGE MARSHALL'S POEM,

ENTITLED

"CYNTHIA AND LEONORA."

HAIL, Sovereign Goodness ! all-productive mind,
 On all Thy works Thyself inscribed we find !
 How different all ! how variously endowed,
 How great their number ! and each part how good.
 How perfect, then, does the great Parent shine,
 Who, with one act of energy divine,
 Laid the vast plan, and finished the design. }
 Where'er the pious search my thoughts pursue,
 Unbounded Goodness opens to my view !
 Nor does our world alone its influence share,
 Exhaustless bounty and unwearied care
 Extend through all th' infinitude of space,
 And circle nature with a wide embrace ;
 The teeming wonders of the deep below,
 Thy power, thy wisdom, and thy goodness show

Here various beings without number stray,
 Crowd the profound, or on the surface play.
 Leviathan, the mightiest of the train,
 Enormous, swims incumbent on the main,
 And foams, and sports, unrivalled in his reign!
 All these thy watchful Providence supplies,
 To thee alone they turn imploring eyes;
 For all thou open'st thy benignant store,
 'Till Nature satisfied demands no more.

— o —

LEONORA TO CYNTHIA, ON HIS RETURN FROM AN UNFORTUNATE VOYAGE.

No more, fond partner of my soul,
 At disappointment grieve,
 Can flowing tears thy fate control,
 Or sighs thy woes relieve!

Adversity is virtue's school,
 To those who right discern;
 Do thou observe each painful rule,
 And each hard lesson learn.

When wintry clouds obscure the sky,
 And heaven the earth deforms,
 If fixed the strong foundations lie,
 The castle braves the storms.

Thus fixed on Faith's unfailing rock,
 May'st thou endure awhile
 Misfortune's rude, impetuous shock,
 And glory in thy toil.

Ill fortune cannot always last,
 But if it should remain,
 Yet dost thou every moment haste
 A better world to gain.

Where calumny no more shall wound,
 Or faithless friends destroy,
 Where Innocence and Truth are crowned
 With never-fading joy.

Let us, my love, still kiss the rod,
 We've better things in view,
 Next to my hopes in thee, my God,
 My soul looks up to you.

There is no reason to believe that any ships were
 built at Blyth before the middle of the last century.

The first person we have found doing carpenter work is Henry Clark, who from time to time receives certain sums from the Plessy coal office for repairing keels. In the raff-yard ledger for 1739, Henry Clark and James Knox, carpenters, each have an account for wood, but to a very trifling amount. In Knox's account are twelve hand-spokes, 5s. In Oct., 1765, there is this entry in the Plessy accounts—"Paid Henry Clark's funeral expenses, to his wife Barbara Clark, one pound one shilling." Whether this was an act of respect to an old servant, or he had lost his life in their employment by some mischance, does not appear: but we may gather from the fact that his worldly position was not a very elevated one. The number of ships then using the port would need the services of Clark and Knox to effect the little repairs that would from time to time be needed, and they may have built craft of the class of the Woodcock, but nothing that deserved the name of a ship.

Mr. Edmund Hannay was the first person who carried on the trade of ship-building in the port. He was in the town in 1750; in the August of that year we find his name in the Custom House as bondsman for the *Constant Ann*, of Scarbro', for London, with 79 chaldrons of coals and 3 tons, 13 cwt. 3qrs. 13lbs. of British stript tobacco stalks. From very small beginnings he rose to considerable eminence as a builder. He continued the business for about fifty years. The vessels he built were highly prized; the materials out of which they were constructed were of the best description; and the workmanship was attended to with the utmost care. One man did all the caulking, another drove all the

treenails, and marvellous were the tales about the length of time some of his crack ships went without needing to be pumped ; in some cases as much as seven years elapsed before they required caulking.

Hannay must have acquired wealth very rapidly, as by the year 1780 he not only was the owner of several ships but had purchased the estate long known as Hannay's Farm from an old family named Preston, whose property it had been for a very long period. Mr. Hannay had two sons but outlived them both ; they died unmarried, one in January, the other in May, 1791. He also had two daughters, one of whom was married to Edward Watts, of Blyth, ship-builder, great grandfather to Mr. Edmund Hannay Watts, the present possessor of the farm. Mr. Hannay resided for very many years in the three-storied stone house facing the sea, at the lane end. His building yard was at the end of the low quay, long known as the Low Yard.

Edmund Hannay belonged to Cupar, in Fifeshire. He was working in Leith as a shipwright, when the rebellion of 1745 took place. By the derangement of trade produced by the rebellion he was driven to seek his fortune in England, and as he proceeded southward he found it an unfavourable time for a Scotsman to travel, the feverish state of the public mind produced by the rebellion, caused him to be looked upon with suspicion, so that by the time he reached Bothal, he felt it necessary to secrete himself among the ruins of Bothal Castle. Hannay, after being in concealment some time, ventured some distance down the Wansbeck, where he encountered Justice Watson, of North Seaton, who,

supposing him to be a fugitive rebel, made an attempt to apprehend him. Hannay fled across the river; the Justice, who was mounted on a pony, in attempting to follow him stuck fast in the mud. The Justice shouted to the fugitive to stop and help him out of the river. Hannay seeing his pursuer incapable of following him ceased to flee, and after some parley ventured to return and help to extricate the horseman. This act of the young Scotsman won the good opinion of Watson, who became his friend. He set him to work to build a boat: his abilities as a workman pleased Watson, who then employed him to build a sloop. Watson was then a young man, and had begun those commercial enterprises which he so successfully continued for the remainder of his long life. Hannay, however, had an eye towards Blyth, as a rising place, and where he would have a fairer prospect of succeeding as a ship-builder. We find him settled at Blyth in 1750.

Mr. John Clark came to Blyth in 1760, a poor lad; and when he died, in 1809, had accumulated an immense fortune. He commenced rope-making in a small way, in the premises now occupied by Mr. Smith. To this he shortly added sail-making, and presently entered into shipping. Cowpen Colliery soon after it was opened fell into his hands; everything he engaged in seemed to prosper, and wealth rolled in upon him in abundance. He married a daughter of George Marshall, and commenced housekeeping in the first house beyond the church, that has been so long occupied by Mr. Robert Thrift's family. In 1771, in an account between Sir M. W. Ridley's agent, Roger Shotton, and John

Clark, we find this item: "To one and a quarter year's rent for the house you live in, the rope-walk, and warehouse, £15." He afterwards built himself a house at Crofton, besides which he occupied Bebside Hall, and drove his coach when I knew him. He had a numerous family, but his sons did not inherit their father's power of retaining money; for with them "riches did make to themselves wings and flee away."

The other families, who from the middle to the end of the last century rose to a degree of wealth and importance in the town, were those of Robert Briggs, William Harrison, Thomas Gibson, Edward Wright, and Matthew Wilson. These had all been bred to the sea, and from being masters of ships became owners.

Smuggling extensively prevailed in this country during the last century. It so far prevailed when Mr. Pitt became premier in 1784, that the loss to the revenue from this source was two millions annually, or one-seventh of the national income. Of tea alone, six and a half million pounds were run ashore, more than half of the entire consumption. The declared importation of French brandy was six hundred thousand gallons, while the quantity smuggled was estimated at four millions. Blyth had its full share of this contraband trade, and was carried on by many of the chief people of the neighbourhood. There were smuggling luggers regularly engaged in the trade; they had connexions at certain parts of the coast, who assisted them to run their cargoes, and dispose of them to the consumers. Fifty years since many stories were still afloat about the smuggling of past times, including the names and doings of various

parties who had been engaged in the traffic. Robert Briggs was understood to have profited largely by this means, and he and Roger Shotton more than once, in altercations they had in public, each accused the other of having made their money by smuggling, and it was quite understood to be so. Briggs was originally master of a stone-boat, which brought limestones from the Durham coast, and delivered it in the upper part of the harbour, at such points as suited the farmers, who burnt it and applied it to their land. He would occasionally, when he met with a smuggling vessel, take on board a loading of spirits, &c., covering them over with stones, taking care to come into the port at a time of the tide that would permit him to proceed at once up the river, to where he was accustomed to take stones, and so deceive the custom house officials. The eccentric Mr. Sidney, who then lived at Cowpen, occasionally found the cash to pay for these cargoes, and shared in the profits. Roger Shotton was agent to the Ridley family, and had many opportunities of doing a little smuggling, of which he availed himself. But these were not the only persons of their grade who were engaged in these transactions. It was the well-to-do portion of the community who consumed the tea and the brandy—small share of either fell to the working class one hundred years ago. Indeed had it not been that the gentry and farmers considered they had an interest in smuggling, by getting the articles cheaper, the parties engaged in vending the uncustomed goods could not have travelled through the country unhindered. Robert Stoker tried his luck in this dangerous game, but not

with much success; he made some sad failures, but was wont to tell with great glee how he outwitted the officers of customs on one occasion. He had come into port with a considerable quantity of contraband spirits on board, and had formed a plan to take advantage of the officers' love of strong drink to put them in a condition that would disqualify them from attending to duty. Mr. Stoker ordered the cabin boy to fill the tea kettle with gin, and place it where it might readily be laid hold of. When the officers came on board they were as usual invited into the cabin to have a dram before making their search. After being seated with the brandy bottle before them, there was found to be a lack of water. Stoker called to the cabin boy to bring water, but he had been instructed not to attend the call; the captain, however, bethought him that there might be water in the kettle, and, directing one of the company where to find it, fortunately, as was thought, it held water in abundance. The officers after adding gin to their brandy, began to imbibe the potent stuff. They were easily prevailed upon to try another glass, and presently they were in as helpless a condition as Stoker could wish. He then got the boat alongside, put the kegs in it, and had them presently out of the reach of the customs. Robert Stoker was a man of mark in his day. He was considered a shrewd clever man, but was thought to have got into litigation oftener than was good for his purse. His was grandfather to Mr. Woolhouse, the celebrated mathematician, whom the "folk of Shields" claim as one of the notabilities their town has produced.

There has no doubt been smuggling carried on here since those days, but upon a very reduced scale. For the last thirty years the Preventive Service has had a station at Blyth; but before that, other causes had brought smuggling down to a trifling amount.

In the years 1795-6-7 portions of the British Army were encamped in the neighbourhood of Blyth. In 1795 there were six regiments encamped between the North Farm and Cowpen. Two of the Infantry regiments, the 55th and 84th, had been with the Duke of York, during the campaign in Holland, the year before, and had endured all the hardships of the terrible winter retreat through Holland to the north of Germany, whence they had been brought, in transports, to the Tyne, in the spring of 1795, and sent forward to Cowpen Camp. There were also two regiments of Light Dragoons, the 7th and 16th; the Leicestershire Militia, and a portion of the Royal Artillery. Between Glo'ster Lodge and Lysdon, the West York Militia, the 44th, and 115th (or Duke of Glo'ster's) regiments were encamped. The 21st (or Beaumont's bay horse), lay in the field in front of Glo'ster Lodge.

On the 28th of August the Duke of York, accompanied by the Duke of Glo'ster, reviewed the troops encamped on the coast of Northumberland. The whole force consisted of thirteen regiments of horse and foot, comprising seven thousand men, took ground on Blyth sands, extending, when in line, about three miles. Precisely at seven o'clock, the Duke of York, attended by General Sir William Howes, commander of the northern district, came upon the ground, and rode along

the line; after which the army went through various evolutions and firings, accompanied by the field and flying artillery, and at eleven o'clock the review concluded. This grand military spectacle, being so novel in this part of the country, attracted an immense number of spectators, calculated to amount to thirty thousand. There were on the ground many persons of rank; among whom were the Duke of Norfolk, Lords Scarbro', Fauconberg, Mulgrave, and Dundas; and Generals Smith and Balfour. The grand review was long talked of in the town by those who witnessed it, as the great event of their lives.

In 1796 the East Middlesex Militia were encamped on the links above the High Pans; and in 1797 two kilted regiments, the Rothsay and the Caithness Fencibles, the light companies of the 35th foot, the Westminster, North Lincoln, Surrey, and Cheshire Militias, lay between the Link-house and Meggy's Burn; the Mid-lothian Light Dragoons lay in the Staith-field, and the Berwickshire Light Dragoons lay along the east and north sides of the Link-house gardens. The old tradesmen used to refer to the time of the Camps as the golden age of business in Blyth. Such a number of people being brought to the neighbourhood turned the little out-of-the-way town upside down, and made money plentiful to a degree as had not been previously known. None profited more by the increase of business than William Robinson; he now got raised above his original poverty, and henceforth took his position as the leading tradesman in the place. He was originally a barber; he came from Bedlington when a young man

and commenced shaving in a small place that stood on part of what is now the Star and Garter yard, but for many years he conducted his business in the shop in Northumberland-street, now occupied by Mr. Cairns, and there he accumulated a fortune. He added to his first trade that of ironmonger, stationer, dealer in hats and shoes, and leather-seller; after he got advanced in life he gave up hairdressing, but continued his other trades till his death. He was a good-looking, well-made man, and though no fop, was always well and tastefully dressed, and of steady and temperate habits. He was a bachelor; and when twitted about his single-blessedness used to reply that bachelors were of great service in bringing up other people's children! He brought up and educated three children belonging his sister, and gave each of them a respectable start in life.

Up to this time there were but few shopkeepers in the town, and they had not yet begun to try to attract customers with plate glass windows and flaming advertisements. Pearson's family had long kept a shop in the under part of the building now occupied by the Mechanics' Institute. At the end of the century the business was in the hands of Die Gibson and her sister, Miss Pearson, and they kept up the good old family custom of bolting the door when about to sit down to their meals; and whoever came might knock as long as they pleased, the ladies would not stir until they had comfortably discussed their meal! It used to be said of Mrs. Newton, who kept a shop a few doors from the former, that when a customer came in after she had begun tea, she would very blandly say, "Ye see hinney,

I'm busy with my tea; come back again when I'm done!" But indeed, neither buyer nor seller were in such haste as at present.

Population still kept increasing, while house-building was at a stand-still. Towards the end of the century, and for many years afterwards, families were crowded into single rooms; every garret had its tenant, and in various parts of the town there were very strange dwelling places. At this period people marrying had to seek a dwelling in some of the neighbouring villages. We have the fact from Mr. John. Watts, that when his parents were married, they could not get a house to put their heads in nearer than Hartford. His father was a seaman, and it may be judged how inconvenient such a state of things must have been; but indeed a great many seamen's families were living at Bedlington, Cowpen, Cambois, &c.

Taking a review of the progress of the town and port up to 1794, we discover no increase in the export of coal. In 1734, 29,777 chaldrons were brought from Plessy to Blyth, while in 1794 the quantity was 25,343. A good many houses had been built, and of a better class, but still far short of the wants of the population. In shipping a considerable increase had taken place, and instead of one vessel—the *Olive Branch* of 42 chaldrons, as in 1750—there were in 1793, thirty vessels belonging to the port, carrying 2,300 chaldrons; besides which there were three firms engaged in ship-building, two roperies, three or four sailmakers, block and mast makers, &c., so that the town had made satisfactory progress in the accumulation of property.

In 1794 a great change began in the adjoining township of Cowpen. A colliery was commenced within a mile of the town, which at once brought a large increase of population and trade. An act of parliament was obtained, and Cowpen Quay was erected, and the space now covered with houses was enclosed. It was several years before it was sufficiently filled up with ballast to prepare it for building upon; and, besides, it was only accessible from Blyth by a long, crazy wooden bridge. In 1810 house-building commenced at Cowpen Quay.

Two or three years later, when Plessy Colliery was discontinued, a railroad was made to connect Cowpen Colliery with Blyth, as we have it at the present time, and instead of the coal being shipped at Cowpen Quay it was sent to Blyth, and thus opened out a road which still continues to present the readiest means of communication between the two places. About the same period Waterloo bridge was built, and a new road was made from the brew-house to Cowpen south pit, which at once united the township of Cowpen to that of Blyth. House-building now went on with great spirit, both at Waterloo and Cowpen Quay, the tenure of the land on that side being preferred to that of Blyth. How much may at times be effected by the erection of a bridge, or the opening out of a new road, though in this case the projectors of these improvements never contemplated the results which followed. Their object was to connect Blyth with the Morpeth and Shields turnpike; and while they realized their purpose, they at the same time opened the way to an abundance of building sites, that were to be had upon favourable terms, the want of which

had heretofore been the great hindrance to the extension of the town.

Having brought down the general history to the conclusion of the eighteenth century, we shall here make a few observations on the state of the town, and its people.

The town had been built with a singular disregard to plan. It is, indeed, difficult to account for the odd way in which the several clusters of houses have been placed in relation to each other. Those who had hitherto had the ordering of these matters must have had a strong aversion to continuous lines of streets; and to judge of their design by the results, it must have been to exhibit as many gables as possible; and in this they succeeded most admirably!

The town in 1800 was chiefly on the south side of the Wagon-hill (now Market-street), and but trifling change has been effected in that portion of the town since, the building of Ridley-street and the west side of Church-street, forming about the only noticeable improvement. The main street was in a most filthy condition; the carriage road had never been laid, and in winter, or rainy seasons, there were only three places between the Wagon-hill and news room where you could pass from one side of the street to the other, and these paths were only kept open by a constant application of coal ashes. Indeed the street was a common receptacle for all matter that householders wished to get rid of.

Country roads were bad everywhere at this time, and Blyth was peculiarly ill provided with the means of communication with other towns. The roads to Shields were much in the same state as they had been in the

time of the Romans. At the time of Blyth camps an ordnance bridge was erected over Meggy's burn, towards the cost of which £100 was contributed out of the county rate: but it was built at an insufficient elevation, and its position exposed it to the action of the sea, whenever a high surf occurred during large tides. From this cause it was soon rendered useless either for vehicles or pedestrians. The road (or rather, track) along the links was all but impassable, especially between the two link-houses. The cart road was shiftable whenever the ruts on the road in use became so deep as to be up to the axle; then another track was taken nearer to the hills; when this became as bad as the former, the same expedient was resorted to; and this process went on till they had got close to the hills. When matters had got to this pass, the old track next to the fields, owing to the sand of which it was composed having fallen into and filled up the old ruts, was prepared for use again; and so it went on as it had done for generations. And such is the power of habit in reconciling us to the greatest inconveniences, that no serious attempt was made to apply a remedy to this state of things, till a change in the tenant of the Link-house farm took place. Mr. Robson, the new tenant, having been used to better roads, felt the inconvenience of the bad ones, and set himself earnestly to have them mended, by inducing the ratepayers of the township to submit to a fourpenny rate for the formation of a road. This was about fifty years since; and the road leading to Cowpen passed over the water-course at the Goteside, opposite where, what was the United Presbyterian

chapel, yet stands, by a ford for carriages, and stepping stones for pedestrians, and then made their way as best they could by a most wretched road to Crofton Mills.

The population amounted at the census of 1801, to 1171, and the population that had been brought together had very much bettered their condition. They were not a half-employed, poverty-stricken race; they had plenty of work at greatly advanced wages—in many cases wages had trebled, and in all cases were at least doubled since 1760, thereby greatly increasing the comfort of the working class. No doubt many desirable things were yet absent, that have since been put within their reach; but all enduring improvements are slow in maturing, and it is pleasant to note that the advance then gained in the working man's position has never been lost. And from this class all the men of wealth and influence then in the town had sprung. At that time the terms "Mr." and "Mrs." had not come into common use among the good people of Blyth; hence, in speaking of the principal people of the town, they would say, Jackey Clark, Markey and Jackey Marshall, Billy Briggs, Neddy Wright, Tommy Harrison, Willey Robinson, and so on.

During the last half of the eighteenth century there was gradually growing up—what eventually became, and has continued to be—the chief investment for capital, and source of employment for the people, the Shipping Trade. While in 1750 the entire capital invested in the only ship belonging to the port, the *Olive Branch*, would not exceed £300, in 1800 the value of the shipping belonging to Blyth could not be less than £50,000. There is one circumstance affecting the trade

of Blyth that deserves attention; it is this, that the chief fortunes that have been made in the town have all been taken out of it. The first family of shipowners we know of, Jacob Lee's, withdrew their money from shipping and invested it in land. The only portion of Mr. Hannay's acquisitions that remained in the neighbourhood was also put into land. The Twizells' money went out of the town; so did also Robert Briggs', and the Marshalls'; and of the immense fortune acquired by John Clarke, all went elsewhere; besides many others of lesser note that we could name. In looking at these facts we cannot help speculating what might have been the position of the town, if the money that has been made in it had been employed in shipping, and other productive trades in connexion with the port. What an immense money-power would have now been residing in the town!—a sufficiency to build docks, or make any other improvements the convenience of trade or the wants of the public required. The town has been very much in the position of an individual who, after acquiring wealth very rapidly, has suddenly lost it, and has started again and again with the like result.

The last sixty years have swept away a number of opinions and traditions that had possessed the popular mind for many ages. The belief in ghosts was almost universal when I was a boy; all the people about me spake of ghosts with as entire a belief in their existence as they did in a race of black men in Africa; and endless were the ghost stories that were current. Telling stories of this kind was a common way of beguiling the long winter evenings. I can well recollect in my

youth sitting with breathless attention to the recital of tales of wraiths having been seen when certain persons were about to die, and the various circumstances connected with them would be related with the utmost minuteness; or if the conversation was commenced by a ghost story, then one and another would tell a tale to match it; thus the evening would pass away, and my imagination had become so excited by listening to these supernatural tales, that I durst not encounter the danger of going home myself in the dark. Respecting some of the other old superstitions, though many of their legends were still retained in the memories of the people, yet a belief of their reality was fast passing away—thus tales of witchcraft were still told, but generally as myths.

The story of one of the Delavals capturing a witch while practising her evil arts in Benton Church, and how she was afterwards burnt; and the wonderful exploits of Meg of Meldon; were always favourites among tales of this class. Some believers of fairies still lingered on earth. A very old woman that lived next door to my father, stood to it to the last, that when milking the cows when a young woman she had seen the fairies. There used to be a tale current in the town, that one of the Hoppers, of the Queen's-lane, once when drying her washing of clothes on the green, where Bath-row now stands, had a visit from the fairies, attired in green, as the little people invariably were when they appeared to mortals.

My impression as to the state of education in Blyth fifty years ago, as far as regards the ability to read, write, and cypher went, is that it was not very defective. There were but few families that did not send their

children to school, but the means of obtaining information was sadly behind what they are at the present time. As to newspapers, they were very rare; a few copies of the *Courant* and *Chronicle* came to Willey Robinson's, by a pedestrian newsman from Newcastle on Saturdays, making the circuit of the villages between Blyth and Newcastle; coming by one route and returning by another. But as to books there were no public libraries, and private ones were very scantily supplied. The only public affair which excited attention at that time was the great war England was waging against the French under the first Napoleon.

During the stirring time of the wars of the French Revolution, Sheraton's parlour at the Star and Garter was the news-room. Mr. Sheraton took in *Lloyds' Evening Post*, the only London paper then coming to Blyth. All who took an interest in public affairs repaired to the Star and Garter to *hear* the news. Old Ebenezer Kell, a custom house officer, read the paper aloud, while the company sipped their grog and smoked their pipes. Mr. Kell sustained the office of reader for many years, and in this fashion made known to the lieges of Blyth, the wonderful campaigns and startling events in the history of the first Napoleon, as well as the naval victories of Nelson, and England's other gallant seamen: and in the later years of the war, the successful campaigns of Wellington, the reverses of the "Corsican wolf"—from the destruction of his grand army in the disastrous retreat from Moscow, to the final overthrow of his power on the field of Waterloo, and his being brought a fugitive to Plymouth in the *Bellerophon*.

CHAPTER IV.

Blyth in time of War. Privateers. Press-gang. Volunteers. Frenchmen taken on Plessy waggon-way. Blyth ships captured. John Campbell and Paul Jones. Henry Wallace. William Murton. Robert Nicholson. John Simpson.

HOWEVER it might be with the inhabitants of inland towns in time of war, it was ever present to the minds of the population of the sea-ports. Seamen, when at sea, were daily in danger of being captured by a French privateer, and carried off to a French prison, there to pine away long years in captivity; and they were equally in danger, when in harbour, of being torn away by a press-gang, and made to serve on board a man-of-war for any length of time the exigencies of war required, and at an amount of pay that if he had a family at home they would be obliged to seek relief from the parish. Then there were a number of Blyth ships employed by the government in the transport service; some or other of our ships were engaged in nearly every military expedition England sent forth. In this way we had vessels in the Duke of York's expedition to Holland; at the bombardment and taking of Copenhagen; in the disastrous Walcheren expedition Blyth ships were at Corunna, to embark the British army at the close of the celebrated retreat under Sir John Moore; and during the remainder of the Peninsular war a great many of our ships were constantly employed in carrying troops or munitions of war to the scene of conflict. Three Blyth vessels were driven on shore at one time in

a gale of wind, and wrecked at Passages, when attending upon Wellington's army, then invading France. These were the *Bedlington Ann*, the *Three Sisters*, and the *Ceylon*. And several were employed in carrying troops and supplies to the British army that fought the battle of Waterloo; and thus the population was mixed up, and familiarised, with war. Indeed those who grew up to manhood during the twenty years' conflict came to look upon war as the normal condition of things.

We proceed to give a few incidents of war affecting Blyth, and a notice of Blyth men who took part in some of England's great naval battles.

In looking over the local newspapers of the last century we find constantly recurring notices of the presence and depredations of French privateers on the coast, keeping the populations of the sea-ports in a constant state of alarm. We will give the substance of the paragraphs bearing on this subject during the latter part of 1761. In the *Newcastle Intelligencer*, of July 28th, it is said that the *Swift*, of London, from Virginia, had been chased from Dunstanborough Castle by a privateer. While the chase was in progress the *Coronation*, from Greenland, came to the aid of the *Swift*, when the privateer thought it prudent to sheer off. The account closes by stating that the same privateer had been captured by an English man-of-war, of 20 guns, which had passed by Tynemouth bar with the prize. In September it is stated, On Monday there was an engagement off Bambro', between two ships, which lasted for three hours, but at so great a distance from the shore that the people there can give no particulars, but that

one of them struck and was carried off by the other to the south. On the same date we have this piece of news: "On Thursday last a vessel was taken off Hartley Bates by a French privateer. A message was immediately sent to the captain of the *Aldborough*, man-of-war, then riding off Tynemouth; he slipped his cable and went in chase of the privateer, and will doubtless take her." The following week there is a letter from Lesbury, stating, "On Thursday last the *Friendship*, of Alnmouth, captain Turner, was taken between Sunderland and Tynemouth, by a French brig privateer, called the *Favorite*, of Havre-de-grace; 100 tons burthen, 6 guns, 4 swivels, 18 oars, 108 men, and a great number of small arms. She had taken and burnt the *John*, Lewis, off Holy Island, not being able to get a ransom for her. She had also taken a Scots brig, and sent her to some port in Norway. The *Friendship* was ransomed for £200. The captain of the privateer says she belongs to the king of France, and that he has orders not to ransom any prizes under £200, and to sink or burn all who would not comply. The *Favorite* went north in chase of three Scotch vessels on their passage from Holland. She took two of them; one was ransomed for £400, the other for £300." Several other notices of her exploits follow, but in October, the editor says, "We are well assured by one just arrived from the Baltic, that the French privateer that has been infesting the north coast, was a few days since run down by a large English ship, and the whole crew perished." So we find that the exploit of the *Merrimac* running down the *Congress* (in the recent United States war), was not

a novelty introduced in the tactics of naval warfare.

In November we have the following account—By a master of a ship arrived at Shields, we are informed that last Thursday, when his ship was off Flambro' Head, in company with four light vessels, they encountered a stout French privateer. Our informant's being the sternmost ship, was first attacked, but the others immediately bore down to his assistance; they all engaged very briskly for some time, when another light ship belonging to Sunderland, coming up and joining in the combat, they soon obliged the privateer to run off. Captain Teasdale, of the Sunderland collier, was killed in the engagement, and the privateer had his mainmast shot away. Extracts of this kind might be multiplied to any extent during the succeeding wars. In May, 1779, a French frigate and three smaller vessels of war, appeared off Shields, where they fell in with a large fleet of ships, several of which they took; the others fled in all directions, and produced serious alarm along the coast. Three months afterwards the coast of Northumberland was greatly alarmed by an incessant firing at sea. It arose from a sharp engagement between two French privateers, of 18 and 24 guns respectively, and the *Content*, an armed ship of 20 guns, assisted by a Greenland-man. A month afterwards great alarm was felt from Paul Jones being on the coast with a hostile squadron. The whole population of Blyth turned out to watch the motions of his fleet, but when he passed the port it was at a considerable offing.

In the time of the American War of Independence, a press-gang was stationed at Blyth, who were a source

of great annoyance to the sea-faring population, but it does not appear that they succeeded to any great extent in their infamous employment. Their first chief lieutenant, Mennel, died in 1780: a tombstone erected to his memory may still be seen in the churchyard.

There was no gang in the town during the twenty years' war of the French revolution, but great numbers of our seamen were impressed when at other ports; and few men there were, except those whom the offices of master or mate protected, who had not a turn on board a man-o'-war. It is true they usually deserted if they found an opportunity: but many men who were taken from their families were compelled to serve in the navy for many long years. After the commencement of the war in 1803, a battery was erected at the south end of the town, in a position to command the entrance to the port. It was armed with three 24-pounder guns; and a detachment of infantry from Tynemouth garrison did duty. The guns were only once fired at an enemy. Some time in 1805, a merchant brig was seen running for the port under a press of sail, a suspicious looking craft in chase of her. An alarm was raised, the battery manned, and a gun fired at the privateer, who finding that she was within range of a battery, at once put about and gave up the chase. The brig finding herself under protection brought up; while the privateer stood off, and was soon out of sight.

At this period the first Napoleon had assembled a large army on the heights of Boulogne, with the avowed purpose of invading this country. Measures were taken at Blyth, as elsewhere, in case of the landing of the

enemy, to convey the women and children into the interior of the country. Alston Moor was said to be the place of refuge for those dwelling on this coast. The number of each family was taken. The farmers' carts were all numbered, and had their place and work allotted them in case of an actual invasion. The threatened invasion aroused the spirit of all England; and volunteer corps were raised all over the country. An abortive attempt was made to form a corps in Blyth; the failure arose out of an excess of candidates for officering the corps; numbers professed themselves ready to venture life and limb in driving back the invading Frenchman, but unhappily their patriotism was overborne by their vanity; they would not fight in any position below that of an officer, and through the miserable squabble engendered by this folly the volunteer movement in Blyth was strangled in the birth.

A company of pike-men, however, was raised, and were exercised in front of the Custom-house. They were made up chiefly of trimmers, pilots, Custom-house officers, &c. But the battle of Trafalgar settled the question of an invasion; that decisive battle left England the mistress of the sea. One Sunday morning in the year 1811, the inhabitants were thrown into a state of great excitement, by the startling news that five Frenchmen had been taken during the night, and were lodged in the guard-house. They were officers who had broken their parole at Edinburgh castle, and in making their way home had reached the neighbourhood of Blyth; when discovered they were resting by the side of Plessy wagon-way, beside the "shoulder of mutton" field. A

party of countrymen who had been out drinking hearing some persons conversing in a strange tongue, suspected what they were, and determined to effect their capture. The fugitives made some resistance, but in the end were captured and brought to Blyth, and given into charge of the soldiers then stationed in the town. This act of the countrymen met with the strongest reprobation of the public; the miscarriage of the poor fellows' plan of escape through the meddling of their captors, excited the sympathy of the inhabitants, rich and poor vying with each other in showing kindness to the strangers. Whatever was likely to alleviate their hapless condition was urged upon their acceptance; victuals they did not refuse, but though money was freely offered them they steadily refused to accept it. The guard-house was surrounded all day long by crowds anxious to get a glimpse of the captives. The men who took the prisoners were rewarded with £5 each, but doubtless it would be the most unsatisfactory wages they ever earned, for long after whenever they showed their faces in the town, they had to endure the upbraiding of men, women, and children; indeed it was years before public feeling about this matter passed away.

The following is the best account of the Blyth Ships that fell into the hands of the enemy during the long French war, that I have been able to obtain:—

The *William and Frances*, an old Blyth vessel belonging to William Harrison, was captured off the Yorkshire coast when on a voyage to Hamburg in 1797. Thos. Patterson, pilot, was an apprentice on board of her at the time. Patterson was impressed soon afterwards, and

was in the *Penelope*, frigate, when the *Guillaume Tell*, French ship of the line, was captured off Malta after a desperate action.

A strange circumstance occurred about this time. A person named Maffin, master of the sloop *Nancy*, the property of Mr. Manners, ran away with the vessel, and carried her into a port of the enemy.

The *Robert*, belonging to John Clark, Robert Thirlbeck master, was the first prize carried into Dieppe, at the beginning of the war in 1803. It was eleven years before the survivors of the crew returned to Blyth.

The *Elizabeth*, belonging to John Gray, Geo. Bulmer master, was captured near Yarmouth roads, but was retaken off Calais, and brought into Dover, in 1807.

The *Ceres*, belonging to Mr. Bury, and commanded by a nephew of his, was taken about the same time.

The *Hull Packet*, Thomas Robinson master, belonging to Mr. Manners, was also captured.

The *Hesperus*, belonging to John Clark, Thomas Gibson master, was captured on Christmas day, 1807; she had just made the English coast, after a long passage in the dark, from Archangel. The master died in a French prison; he was son of Thomas Gibson, one of our first shipowners. Two sons of the master of the *Hesperus*, Thomas and Nicholas, were afterwards shipmasters.

The *Caroline*, James Black master and owner, was taken off Dungeness, in 1809, and carried into Dieppe. Edward Taylor, marine store dealer, then a very young man, was mate of the *Caroline*. He was sent to Longwy, where his father was imprisoned, who had been taken

in the *Robert* six years before; and father and son continued in captivity together until 1814.

The *William*, belonging to John Clark, John Elder master, was taken on her passage from Lisbon.

The *Edmund and Mary*, Andrew Hodgson master, was taken off Blyth by a French privateer: she had just left port with several other vessels, one of which was the *Eleanor*, John Thrift master. Thrift had witnessed the capture, and standing away southward fortunately fell in with the *Censor* gun brig, off Shields. Thrift informed the captain what had happened, and pointed out the direction in which the privateer and her prize had gone. The gun brig at once set all sail in chase, and presently came up with and re-took the *Edmund and Mary*, but the privateer escaped. This occurred on New Year's day, 1810.

The *Hygea*, belonging to Thomas Nazeby, Thomas Nazeby, jun., master, was driven out of the Downs in a gale of wind on to the French coast, and was captured.

The *Westmoreland*, belonging to Matthew Wilson, Mr. Wheatley master, was taken, on her passage to Archangel, by an American frigate, and burnt, together with a valuable cargo.

The *Nautilus*, belonging to the Messrs. Marshall, Philip Dodds master, was taken on her passage to America, by an American privateer. It happened that Mr. Dodds and the captain of the privateer were both free masons. The American considered it his duty as a mason to give up his claim to the captured ship to his brother mason; and accordingly gave up the ship to Mr. Dodds, who then pursued his voyage to a successful termination.

From the notices we gave of privateering in the middle of the last century, it will be seen that the general practice then was for the master of the captured ship to enter into an agreement to pay a sum of money as ransom, the ship and crew were then at liberty to pursue their voyage; but in the wars towards the end of the century, the practice of ransoming had ceased, and both ship and crew were carried into port; the former to be sold, and the latter detained in prison. But imprisonment never lasted long, as there were frequent exchanges of prisoners between the belligerents; till the last French war, when, from the non-exchange of prisoners, it became a heavy calamity to those who fell into the hands of the enemy, for they had to remain prisoners till the end of the war; indeed, of the crews of the above ships very many never lived to see their homes again, but died in a foreign prison. And of the masters, besides Thomas Gibson, there were three others who died—Thirlbeck, Nazeby, and Elder.

John Campbell, who was a pilot at the beginning of the century, was one of the crew of the *Serapis*, when she had the remarkable action with Paul Jones, off Scarborough, on the 23rd September, 1779. The *Serapis* was fought till there were not twenty unwounded men on board. John was wounded in the hand; this is still considered the hardest contested action in the history of the British navy. In the summer of 1779 Paul Jones cruised along our eastern coasts, no longer with a single ship, but with a squadron, manned by French and Americans, and desperadoes from various other countries, tempted into the service by exaggerated accounts

of the enormous amount of prize money he had made. In this present cruise he had alarmed all the defenceless parts of the eastern coast, from Flambro' Head, to the Frith of Tay: but his great object was to intercept the Baltic trade, which was under convoy of the ship *Serapis*, 40 guns; captain Richard Pearson; and the *Countess of Scarborough*, armed ship of 20 guns, captain Percy. This fleet had arrived safely off the Yorkshire coast, when the bailiff of the corporation of the town of Scarbro', sent off to inform captain Pearson that a flying squadron of the enemy's ships had been seen the day before standing to the southward. About seven o'clock in the evening of the 23rd of September, Paul Jones, in the *Bonhomme Richard*, a two-decker, carrying 40 guns, engaged captain Pearson, in the *Serapis*, within musket shot; after firing two or three broadsides, he backed his topsails, dropped within pistol shot on the *Serapis'* quarter, and attempted to board. Captain Pearson repulsed the corsair in his attempt, and Jones sheered off; but after one or two other manœuvres, and more than one accident, the two ships dropped alongside of each other, head and stern, and so close that the muzzels of the guns touched and grated against each other; in this close contact the action continued with the greatest fury, from half-past eight till half-past ten, during which time Jones, who had far more men, vainly attempted to board; the *Serapis* was set on fire ten or twelve times, and each time the fire was extinguished; and captain Pearson had on the whole the best of the battle, when one of the frigates, after assisting in disabling the *Countess of Scarborough*, came up to the assistance of the *Bonhomme Richard*, and kept constantly

sailing round the *Serapis*, till almost every man on the main and quarter decks was either killed or wounded. The combat, as Cooper tells it, would soon have terminated in favour of the British, had it not been for the marksmen in the tops of the revolutionary fleet, who drove every man on the forecastle and quarter deck of the *Serapis* below, by musketry fire, if not otherwise struck down. Some American seamen then lay out on the lower yards of the *Bonhomme Richard*, and sent grenades and combustibles down the hatchways of the *Serapis*. The inflammable ingredients set fire to the cartridges, these caught from gun to gun, and killed and wounded about 60 of her crew. Captain Pearson hauled down the colours of the *Serapis* with his own hands, the men refusing to expose themselves to the fire of the *Richard's* tops, for they could not keep the upper deck. Had the action continued a short time longer, the American ship must have given up the contest, for a few hours after the engagement she sunk. John Campbell, after he came home, was made a pilot, which situation he held till his death.

Henry Wallace served in the navy from 1793 to the peace of 1814, except for a few months during the short peace of 1802. He commenced his gallant career in the *Beaulieu* frigate, and finished his active service in the *Caledonia*, the flag-ship of Sir Edward Pellew, in 1814; and amongst the gallant seamen who so nobly fought the battles, and upheld the honour of England, during those eventful years, none better deserved to be called "the bravest of the brave," than Henry. He was with Dunean in the general action with the Dutch at Cam-

perdown, and highly distinguished himself at the siege and taking of Martinique. He is mentioned by name in the *Naval Chronicle*, and other publications treating of naval history, in their narration of the cutting of the French corvette, *Chevette*, out of Brest roads in 1800. The *Chevette* had come out of Brest, and anchored in Camaret bay, in the presence of the British fleet, then blockading the port. The English considered her presence there a sort of challenge to come and take her if they dared, and they resolved to make the attempt. A number of boats were manned and sent to bring her out, but through some mishap daylight came before they reached her, and thus showed their purpose to the French, who thereupon took additional precautions for her security—she was taken closer to the batteries, a party of soldiers sent on board, and a netting run up her rigging to prevent her being boarded. The English undeterred by all these precautions, resolved at whatever cost to attempt her capture, which in a few nights after they did. Unfortunately the division of boats, in which was the commanding officer, missed its way; the other division succeeded in reaching the bay. While waiting for the coming of the missing division, the wind changed, and blew directly out of the bay. This determined the officer in command of the boats then present as to his plan of operations, which was to get the ship under weigh by setting her sails and cutting her cable. To effect this he appointed a number of men to take the shrouds of each mast, to mount to the several yards, then unfurl the sails and set them. Another party to cut the cable. Henry Wallace, with two others,

were to fight their way to the helm, which Henry was to take, and steer the ship out to sea, while the main body were to overpower the crew. The French discovered the boats before they were alongside, and of course gave them a warm reception ; but nothing could prevent the English seamen from boarding, each party succeeding in reaching their place and doing the work assigned them. The French were making a stout resistance to the party appointed to clear the decks, but when the contest was at its height the French were astonished to find that the sails were set, the cables cut, and the vessel proceeding out of the bay. This at once threw them into confusion ; they ceased to defend the deck, and ran below. They continued to fire up the hatches for some time, but were presently subdued. The French in the batteries, seeing the ship proceeding out to sea, began to fire upon her, but they continued to increase their distance, and though frequently hit they finally succeeded in bringing her out. Henry had gallantly fought his way to the wheel ; although severely wounded in the contest, and bleeding, he steadily remained at his station, steering the *Chevette* out until she was in safety from the fire of the batteries ; and on his officer saying he was afraid his wounds were severe the brave fellow replied that it was only a graze and a prick from a cutlass, and would not prevent him from such another expedition again, and wished it were the following night ! He knew there was an arduous and important service about to be performed by the boats of the fleet, and being among the volunteers from the *Beaulieu*, concealed the state of his wounds that he might not be

laid aside. This brave man had served seven years in the ship, and constantly distinguished himself on every service of danger that occurred ; and if any extraordinary exertion was required Wallace was sure to be the foremost—if a man had fallen overboard, he was always fortunately in the way, and either in boats or water. During the time he belonged to the ship nearly a dozen men were indebted to him for their lives, which he had saved by plunging overboard, sometimes even in a gale of wind, at the utmost hazard of his own. He finished his naval career, as already stated, in the *Caledonian*. His great gallantry and ability as a seaman made him a general favourite with his commanders, especially Sir Edward Pellew, who showed him great kindness, and would gladly have promoted him to the quarter deck ; but Henry's love of strong drink prevented him ever rising higher than a quarter master. In 1814 he returned to Blyth where he resided till his death. He had, as was his wont at pension time, been taking his grog too freely when he fell over the quay, and though he was got out in a few minutes it was found impossible to recover him, and he died shortly after being carried home, aged 79 years.

William Murton was in the *Victory*, with Nelson, on the famous day of Trafalgar, and was one of the seamen of that ship who were selected to attend the funeral of the Admiral, and whose presence in the procession to Westminster Abbey formed one of the most remarkable sights on that day, when England gave her favourite Admiral a public funeral. Murton was a fine seaman, and would have been promoted had he remained in the

navy; but he was a married man, and preferred coming home and taking his chance of promotion in the commercial navy, in which he was soon made master. He died many years ago.

Robert Nicholson was carpenter of the *Bellerophon* at the battle of Trafalgar. The *Bellerophon* took a splendid share in that celebrated fight, and was fifth ship in Collingwood's line. Besides being dismasted during the action, she had 150 killed and wounded; and her captain, Cook, was one of the two English captains who were slain on that eventful day. Robert used to boast that the *Bellerophon* fought two battles at Trafalgar. When the general action closed, the whole of the crew, except those disabled, were working hard to get the ship back into trim. Nicholson and his mates were over the ship's sides plugging the shot holes. At that critical moment the French rear-admiral Dumanoir, with five ships that had not taken any share in the action, bore down upon the disabled British ships. The men were again called to quarters, to which they responded with as much alacrity as if they had not been engaged that day. The spirit of the men was up; they had just won the most glorious and decisive victory that even British seamen had ever won, and it was not to be snatched away by this fresh onslaught. The defiant British cheer arose from the battered ships, and they joined in battle again, reduced as were their numbers and crippled their ships, and defended themselves with such gallantry that the enemy could make no impression on them; so that, leaving one of their ships a prize to the English, they were glad to haul off and make their escape. It

was these ships that were a few days afterwards met and captured by Sir Richard Strachan.

Robert remained many years in the navy ; when far advanced in life he returned to Blyth. The men who fought at Trafalgar always looked upon the 21st of October as the proudest day of their lives, and many of them commemorated its return with as bountiful an allowance of grog as they could command. About the fortieth anniversary of the battle Robert had passed the day without recollecting Trafalgar. After getting to bed at night, the great battle recurred to his memory, and he began to suspect that he had let the glorious day pass over without having celebrated it according to his wont; he appealed to his wife, who had not yet retired to rest, if it was not the anniversary of the great day; after some consultation they came to the conclusion that it was the veritable day! Robert at once rose from his bed, and Mary went to purchase a pot of rum, over which he "fought his battles o'er again," before he returned to rest.

John Simpson, still living, was one of the crew of the *Standard*, 74, when that ship was sent to join Nelson on the eve of the battle of Trafalgar, and arrived off Cadiz to find that the battle was over. In the beginning of 1807 the *Standard* was one of Sir John Duckworth's squadron when he forced the passage of the Dardanelles. The naval historian Brenton, in describing that desperate attempt, says—"In what instance in the whole course of our naval warfare, have ships received equal damage in so short a time, as in this extraordinary enterprize! The *Royal George* had her

cutwater carried away by a granite shot, which nearly sunk her; another shot cut the mainmast of the *Windsor Castle* almost in two; a shot of the same description knocked two ports into one on board the *Thunderer*; the *Repulse*, by another, had her wheel shot away, and 24 men killed and wounded, nor was the ship saved from going on shore except by the most wonderful exertions; a granite shot came through the larboard bow of the *Active*, on her lower deck, rolled aft, and brought up abreast of the main hatchway, another took away the whole barricade of the forecastle between the two ports. The *Standard* was also struck by a single shot, which went through the upper deck killing and wounding 59 men." Robert Foreman was also engaged in this affair; he was carpenter of the *Endymion*, which ship was hit on the side by one of the big shot, and twelve of her crew struck down. The heaviest shot which hit our ships was of granite, and weighed 800lbs., and was two feet two inches in diameter.

The above are not to be considered as all the Blyth men who took part in the long war. Many others had seen much service, but I am not sufficiently acquainted with the facts to enable me to give details. Thomas Marshall was present in admiral Keppell's action with the French fleet under count d'Orvilliers. James Philips was in the *Culloden* with the gallant Troubridge, when she grounded in running down to attack the French at the battle of the Nile. His elder brother Joseph enlisted into a dragoon regiment, and rose by merit to be a captain in the 12th; he died only a few years ago highly esteemed as a man and a soldier. James was one

of the crew of the *York*, 64 guns, captain Mitford, when that unfortunate ship foundered in the North Sea with the whole of her crew.

In the great disaster which befell the Baltic squadron on its return to England, Christmas, 1811, two Blyth seamen lost their lives. The *St. George*, 98 guns, rear-admiral Reynolds, and the *Defence*, 74 guns, captain Adkins, were driven by a dreadful hurricane on to the Jutland coast, when out of the two crews mustering 1300 men, only 18 were saved. The *Hero*, 74, captain Newman, went on shore near the Helder point, and the whole crew perished. Edward Smart was in the last-named vessel, and William Marshall in the *Defence*. Robert Mitchell, great grandfather to the Mitchell family residing in Waterloo Road, was with captain Cook on his second voyage of discovery.



CHAPTER V.

Ship-building. Lynn. Manser's Duel. William Carr. Postal arrangements. Rejoicings at Peace. Burning Effigies. John Robinson. Great Seamen's strike.

WE have already stated that there were three firms engaged in shipbuilding. There were beside Mr. Hannay, Mr. Edward Watts, who built ships where the dock is now; and Mark Watson, whose building-yard was where the lime-kiln now stands, near Cowpen Square. At the beginning of the century the two former were dead, and Watson had removed to Lynn, but their places were soon filled up; Manners and Bates had a building-yard on the low quay. Mr. Debord and a Mr. Morrison built some ships at the upper end of the quay at the link-end. Mr. Debord afterwards built ships at the High Pans. Messrs. Wright had the building-yard formerly occupied by Edward Watts, and for some time Munroe and Davison built ships at the north side, where the ballast quay now stands. The Davison family began ship-building at the low yard about 1802. They built many very useful vessels, but in a much less finished style than our modern builders. In 1810 Mr. Charles Clark and Mr. Henry Taylor began business as ship-builders at Cowpen Quay, where Bowman and Drummond afterwards constructed their slipway. In 1811 the dry dock was constructed by Messrs Linskill and Co.: the resident and managing partner was Patrick Holland; he lived

at Crofton, and was for several years one of the foremost men in the town. In the three last establishments business was carried on to a much larger extent than any of the former firms had done. At this time shipwrights' wages became very high, and the practice was for builders to take for apprentices full-grown men, to whom they gave from fifteen to twenty shillings per week for three or four years; and of these there were a large number. At this period carpenters formed a large portion of the population of the town. A great proportion of the ships built by these firms, to the end of the war in 1815, were for Blyth owners. It was this class of vessels chiefly that were employed in the transport service during the last six or seven years of the war. The *William and Ann*, built by the Davisons for Messrs. Jobson, was considered by far the fastest sailing vessel in any of the northern ports; indeed the seamen who were in her when she was in the transport service used to tell of her having on several occasions beat some of the swiftest frigates in the navy.

From an early period Blyth had an extensive intercourse with the port of Lynn. In 1733, of 296 ships clearing coastwise, 127 went to Lynn. In 1794, 33 Lynn vessels were trading to Blyth, and many of the Lynn masters were well known in the town, and mixed a good deal with public-house society. At the beginning of the century Mr. Charles Manser was well known, and was one of the chief men in all convivial parties; his father was master and owner of the *Norfolk* of Lynn, and had traded to Blyth for a long period. He had given Charles a classical education, but being a

wild youth he had put him to sea; and among the many proofs that education is not an unfailing means of producing good conduct Charles was a striking example. He was a great practical joker: one of his practical jokes, which took the form of a sham duel, produced a great deal of mirth at the time, and set James Weddell, the Plessy poet, a-rhyming. The Black Bull was the great house of resort for Lynn captains; and Doctor English was a boon companion of the frequenters of that house. It happened that four shipowners came on an excursion to Blyth, and met with the doctor at the Black Bull. The doctor introduced a favourite project of his, of forming what he termed a Moravian Society. The landlord, James Matthewson, was induced to submit to be made the first member. The doctor, seeing the operation caused considerable pain, declined to be made a member himself. This brought upon him from the company the charge of duplicity. After much noisy talk the doctor bet the company a rump and dozen that no one present could deceive him by any means they could devise. This led Manser to get up a mock duel, and invite English to act surgeon on the occasion. The following is Weddell's rhyming narrative of the affair. The duel took place in the field in which Freehold-street is now built. It happened in 1809.

THE DUEL.

Two heroes lately fought a duel,
 Tho' not intentionally cruel,
 Their tempers placable and equal,
 As proved by the sequel.
 Manser and Harrison were they,
 Engaged in this funny fray,
 Their seconds, Houtton and Greenway, }

A worthy Doctor too was sent for,
 Who to deceive was all they meant, Sir,
 More clearly to explain the rub,
 The party wished to form a Club;
 Nor Gaul admit, nor yet Batavian.
 The name of each should be Moravian,
 Should to each other faithful prove,
 And live in unity and love.
 The Doctor, who himself did move it,
 Did shortly after disapprove it,
 And swore by Jove he would be free,
 Nor ever would a member be.
 In order that they might believe him
 A bet he made none could deceive him,
 Which was the reason, I aver,
 That brought these valiant men to war.
 But e'er the contest it began
 They formed the following artful plan :
 To name the case just as it stood,
 They got a pudding filled with blood,
 Chose the same both wide and thin,
 Annex'd it close to Manser's skin ;
 The time arrived which was set,
 So at the spot the parties met.
 They charged with powder, that was all,
 For prudence said, Beware of ball !
 But one of them was doomed to fall. }
 So, being ready, they retired
 Six paces back, turned round and fired !
 Poor Manser fell all on a sudden,
 And in the fall he burst the pudding.
 The blood ran down his side and thighs,
 Which put the surgeon in surprise,
 And thus exclaimed as he ran—
 " O Harrison, you've killed the man ! "
 Tore off his clothes, cry'd " By my soul,
 I cannot find the bullet's hole."
 Used every scheme that man could do,
 And cry'd aloud, " More tow, more tow ! "
 Manser the joke now could not hide,
 The Doctor tickled so his side,
 But, bursting into laughter, said,
 " I have no wounds, be not afraid ;
 And though no Frenchman or Batavian
 I've made you now a true Moravian."
 The Doctor now perceived the joke,
 Was much chagrined, nay scarcely spoke ;
 He drooped his head and slunk away,
 Nor faced the party more that day.
 So to the Bull they did repair,
 And got a sound refreshment there,
 And told it unto priest and proctor

How dexterously they had done the Doctor.
Reader, you may the inference draw,
From lenity or reason's law,
No man on earth should boast or scoff—
The wisest may be taken off.

Chief among Blyth's departed worthies whose history is entitled to honourable distinction, is William Carr : he was the most remarkable man the town could ever boast of, and for fifty years was the great sight we had to show to strangers, numbers of people coming from great distances to get a sight of him. He was born at Hartley Old Engine, April 3rd, 1756, but shortly after his birth his parents removed to Blyth. His father was a master blacksmith, and brought his son up to the same trade. When in his full vigour and prime he was unquestionably the strongest man in the United Kingdom, if not in the world ; when only seventeen years of age, he was 6ft. 3½in. in height, weighed 18st., and could easily lift seven or eight hundredweight. While a youth he could throw a 56lb. weight with a 4lb. one attached to it, either before or behind him a distance of eight yards. In these peculiar feats he was once challenged to a trial of muscular power with the celebrated "Mick Downey," but on finding that the "Blyth Samson" had appeared on the scene, and was eager for the fray, Mick prudently shrunk from the encounter. On reaching thirty years of age Carr weighed 24st., and was 6ft. 4in. in height. There have been far heavier men than Carr, and one of the Huggups of Northseaton, was at least three inches taller. It was bone and muscle, covered with a moderate quantity of flesh, that

constituted his bulk ; every part of his giant frame was fully developed, and with the most perfect symmetry, and he was good-looking even to old age. On seeing him you were struck not so much with his great height, as with the depth and fulness of his chest, and the great breadth of his shoulders, and when young he was as agile as he was strong. On one occasion he leapt over a five-barred gate with a young woman 8st. weight under his arm ! About this period of life his power of withstanding long-continued labour without fatigue is proved by the fact of his having wrought one hundred and thirty-two consecutive hours, without rest ; and after twelve hours of rest, working for one hundred and twenty hours longer. This he did on different occasions in repairing engines at Hartley, Plessy, and Bedlington. Five seamen were engaged in conveying an anchor weighing half a ton, and a piece of chain cable to the shop of Carr's father, but failed in the attempt ; young Carr was sent to their help, and to show them what puny fellows they were, took up the anchor and carried it to the shop himself.

Carr was quiet and gentle in his manners, and stood high in the estimation of his townsmen. He had a most extensive acquaintance, people of all ranks noticed him, and treated him with respect ; he was often introduced into respectable society, and always conducted himself on those occasions in such a manner as to gain the good opinion of all whom he met. Few men made more friends or kept them better than Carr. When Carr was in his prime the late Lord Delaval was, by the profusion of his housekeeping, maintaining the ancient fame of

that family for hospitality; and to gratify the numerous visitors whom the good cheer of his lordship attracted to his beautiful Hall, Carr was often sent for that they might see the world-renowned blacksmith, and witness an exhibition of some of his feats of strength. Not all the guests at Seaton Delaval were members of the "upper ten thousand," leading members of the equally degrading turf and ring were frequent visitors. Once when the famous Big Ben was there Carr was sent for to have a fight with him, for the amusement of a select circle of *fashionables*! His lordship introduced the combatants with a request that they would shake hands. Willey bashfully received the pugilistic hand within his own, and after giving it a vice-like grip, which caused blood to ooze from Ben's finger ends, the celebrated pugilist announced to his lordship that he should decline the combat, and would rather receive a kick from a horse than a blow from such a hand. On another occasion the celebrated boxer Mendoza, accompanied by lords Strathmore and Tyreconnel, came over from the Hall to visit the big blacksmith. Lord Delaval had his portrait taken in his working habit, which picture his lordship highly prized. It was afterwards removed to Gibside.

After the death of his father Carr carried on the business on his own account. His shop stood on the south side of the salt pans, and he acquired fame as a maker of harpoons used in the Greenland trade, forming them of iron made from old horse shoe nails, obtained from the country horse-shoers. He employed boys in compactly filling them into iron rings; these after being sufficiently heated to weld, were put under the hammer and conso-

lidedated: and iron thus made was said to be remarkably tough, and would stretch rather than break under the immense strain to which harpoons were frequently subjected in capturing whales. One of the most remarkable anecdotes related of Carr arose out of this part of his business; he had been late in completing an order for harpoons for the *Euretta*, captain Boswell. It was not till the morning of the day on which the ship had to sail that the harpoons were finished and packed in a box. Carr himself took them down to Willey Middleton, the carrier, to be taken to Shields; but he found the carrier had gone rather earlier than usual. No other conveyance being available Carr determined that Boswell should have the harpoons in time, and made up his mind to carry them himself; so he took the box of harpoons, weighing a cwt. on his shoulder, and carried them to Shields; but another feat which he accomplished on the journey was more remarkable still—he *drank eighty-four glasses of spirits, and returned home sober!* While Carr's wife was on her death-bed, two sailors on board a ship which lay opposite his house, quarrelled, and came on to the quay to fight. The noise annoying the sick woman, he went out and besought the belligerents to cease their noise, or go elsewhere. This they doggedly refused to do. Finding persuasion would not do, he resorted to a somewhat less gentle method—taking the pugilists by the neck, one in each hand, he knocked their heads together till they were fain to promise better behaviour, and then greatly crest-fallen they slunk on board their ship, amid the laughter of the crowd collected together by the row!

He was, however, far from using his great power to annoy his associates: he was no bully, nor did he ever seek occasion to provoke a quarrel, but was on the contrary remarkable for his extreme good nature. Once when at Morpeth races, a Scotch lord struck him with his whip; but this was too much for even Carr's good nature. He laid hold of his assailant, and brought him off his horse with a grip that instantly cowed his lordship, and made him feel that the man he had wantonly provoked could annihilate him if he chose; but Carr carried the matter no further than to convince his lordship that he was not to be insulted with impunity. He was long afterwards known by the *soubriquet* of Lord Haddo—that being the nobleman's name. In 1818 he had a paralytic stroke, and for a considerable time before his death was confined to bed. He died September 6th, 1825. The name, like that of many other old Blyth families has become extinct, though there are several of the children of both of his daughters still living in the town—the Fenwicks and the Simpsons. There is a fast-decaying gravestone in Blyth churchyard, on which is the following inscription: "Here lies interred Frances, the wife of William Carr, wagonsmith. May the 16th, 1769." This was the mother of Carr. There is another inscription on the stone almost illegible, about the death of some of Carr's sister's (Mrs. Collier's) children; but there is no memorial of any other member of Carr's family.

The postal arrangements of Blyth were very imperfect till the beginning of the present century. Till about the year 1780 no post came to Blyth. Before that period,

the Plessey coal office, for many years, occasionally sent a person to Newcastle with letters. But it appears marvellous how large an amount of business that office conducted with so small an amount of correspondence. The first regular post came, as now, by Morpeth: the letters went and came once a week, by James Alexander the carrier. About sixty years ago it was arranged for letters to come by Shields, three days a week, by a riding postman. When he arrived he sounded his horn as he came up the street: he then ascended the mount at the Star and Garter door, and read over the names of the parties to whom the letters were addressed. There were commonly a considerable number of people collected: a few were expecting letters, and a number of gossips who, having little business of their own to attend to, kindly spent their leisure in attending to the business of their neighbours. These were the special dread of young females who were expecting letters from their lovers; but it was understood that those ladies generally managed to outwit the gossips, by bribing the postman to omit announcing their letters.

But after a storm at sea, vast numbers would attend and listen with breathless attention to learn if there was a letter for the owner or master's wife of such ships as were known to have been exposed to the storm. About the close of the war a daily post was established. Mr. Sheraton was the first postmaster; a small place was boxed off, what was then the Star tap-room, and George Hills, hostler at the Star, was appointed to deliver the letters, whom the young people were wont to annoy, by asking him "What news from the Hague?" an in-

quity which always spoilt the old man's temper, and was, of course, for that reason, the more frequently put. At that time the postage of a London letter was 13½d. Letters from Newcastle were 5½d. and from other places in proportion. The business of the Post Office has increased to a remarkable degree since George the postman used to stand on the mount with a handful of letters, and announce their addresses to a crowd of listeners. The following is the amount of business done in the Blyth Post Office during the year 1861:—the entire number of letters passing through the office was 190,750; of these there were 99,500 inwards, and 91,250 outwards. There were 14,400 newspapers; of these 10,950 were inwards, and 3,650 outwards. There were 4,050 post office orders, for the sum of £8,992; of these there were 2,831 issued, representing £6,556; and 1,219 paid, amounting to £2,436. At our last issue there were three deliverers employed, and Cowpen and Bebside had and still have each an office of their own. There may be about two thousand families within the limits of the Blyth delivery. The following statement of the business done in the year 1868 will show how rapidly the business of the Post Office continues to increase. In 1868, the number of letters passing through the office was 396,523, viz.:—195,208 inwards, and 201,315 outwards. There were 7,544 post office orders, for the sum of £14,832, viz.:—4,976 issued, for £10,253, and 2,568 paid, amounting to £4,579. 418 Savings Bank deposits, representing £1,985. There are now four deliverers, and two daily deliveries—one at 8 a.m., and another at 7 p.m.

Great rejoicings took place at the return of peace in

1814. All ranks united in forming a grand procession, which commenced at the Wagon-hill headed by Thomas Potts (a person of remarkably low stature), mounted on a large white horse, and attended by a detachment of the Northumberland Militia then on duty at Blyth, marched down to the battery to the sound of the best music the town could afford. At night there was a general illumination. Few places had more cause to rejoice that peace was restored to Europe than Blyth. No doubt individuals had profited by the war, but many families had suffered greatly; some by having their husbands and sons dragged away by the press-gang, and made to serve on board ships of war, and the relatives of others had pined for long weary years in a French prison, half of whom did not live to return.

The rejoicings continued for several successive nights, on one of which the effigies of James Nicholson and John Robinson were paraded through the town, and then burnt opposite the Star and Garter. These persons were called Jacobins, which was understood to mean a leaning towards the principles of the French revolution; or being reformers in politics, and somewhat sceptical in religion: everything French being at that time viewed with intense aversion. But the fact was that these men were the two best informed men of their class in the town, and their political opinions would have now been esteemed as that of moderate reformers. But in a very few years they were amply avenged for the indignities now heaped upon them on account of their opinions. In the years that followed, it was found that Plenty had not come with Peace. The general and long continued

stagnation of trade which followed the peace bore hard upon the working classes, and prepared them to listen with readiness to the highly seasoned political teachings of the Black Dwarf and Cobbett's Register; so that the Radical Reform movement gathered around it the whole of the younger portions of the community, and those who had been the most active in burning their neighbours in effigy for their alleged Jacobinism in 1814, were themselves the most ardent Radicals in 1818.

John Robinson deserves more than the passing notice we have given. Many of the readers of this history will remember something of the man; yet, many who knew little more than they saw of him may think that he was a poor good-for-nothing. Not so: the dirty, ragged, unshaven being, who used to pass through the streets with his hands in his pockets and his head upon his breast, was, despite his appearance, worthy of considerable respect. He was degraded enough in position, but could not be said to be a degraded character. He had many merits, yet was in many things a strange unaccountable being. For many years he had neither house nor home: never slept in a bed, but in hay-lofts or barns, or about the salt pans. On this subject, however, John never liked to be questioned: if teased about his lodgings he was reserved or angry—often, too, he knew what it was to be pinched with hunger. On one occasion he fasted for, I think, a fortnight—or at least had nothing but a few beans and water. This was at the beginning of his houseless and strange way of living, and before his pride could stoop to let his need be known. To the end, indeed, he never fairly begged; but when hungry

would drop in upon any of his friends at meal time ; or by his dejected countenance as good as say—"I could take something to eat if you would offer it:" and this only after he had gone two or three days without food. After one of these fasts had been succeeded by a good meal was the time to draw him out in conversation. Then he would talk as if he would never stop again. If on Geography—a favourite subject—he would take his piece of chalk, draw out the various countries, seas, and rivers, and give descriptions of the countries, and the histories of them, in his rapid and somewhat stuttering way ; sometimes he would quote long passages of poetry from Milton or Shakspeare, but most largely from Pope. As regards the history of the town and neighbourhood, he was a very encyclopædia. He knew all the old inhabitants ; their business and family connexions, and all the events, great and small, that had taken place in his own time, and long anterior to that. The wonder was, how a man who had led so aimless a life could have gained so much knowledge ; for there were few subjects on which he could not talk, and on many he was exceedingly well informed—but the fact was, John was capable of great, though not of very steady and prolonged application.

When in the humour to work at his trade, as shipwright, he worked very hard ; and when in the humour to read, he read intensely. He could sit at a book a whole summer's day, unconscious of anything that was going on around him. He had great powers of observation ; a very retentive memory ; and would take great trouble to get to know anything he wanted to know:

He used to tell with great glee how his wit once got him a good dinner. He was paying a visit to a farmer at some little distance—one of the old school, and a little superstitious. On the morning of his visit, a rather unusual thing had taken place—a hen had crowed: a bad omen, the result of which was, a cart had upset, and some other accidents had happened: and when John entered the kitchen, chucky was paying the penalty of her crowing—was roasting before the fire. John at once slyly suggested that it might be unlucky to eat the fowl. Enough, no one would touch it, and so it fell to the lot of Robinson, who no doubt thought that whatever else was unlucky, he was not. On another occasion the result of John's wit was not so happy. He had been telling over a mistake, or slip of the tongue, which a gentleman had made, thus:—this gentleman met, in a street of Newcastle, a farmer whom he knew; but knowing his brother as well, and not being able at the moment to get hold of the name, he felt perplexed in addressing him; so, after shaking hands, he said, "is this you, or your brother?" The farmer dryly replied "It's me, sir;" whereupon they both laughed heartily over the little slip. But John, in telling it over, seemed as if he could hardly pardon even such a little mistake from a man of rank and education; whereupon the company asked what he would have said in a like perplexity. Said John, raising himself up in dignity, "I would have said,"—then he stopped—"I would have said, which of the two are you? is it you or your brother? Thomas or Francis?" Of course, over this confusion worse confounded both John and his companions laughed heartily

again. Poor Robinson ended his days in the workhouse, a place he much dreaded. But for the lack of stability and application he might have made a better end. He was brought up by parents who, though poor, were very respectable. He had respectable connexions who to the end kindly cared for him in many ways, reserving for him cast-off clothing, or supplying him with clean linen, and with many a meal. He at least merits the imperfect sketch we have given. A history of Blyth without a notice of John Robinson would be incomplete. The writer many times urged him to put into writing his vast fund of information respecting Blyth and its people. He liked the idea, but could not bring himself to submit to the labour the thing required.

In the autumn of 1815 the Great Seamen's Strike took place. The sudden reduction of the navy at the close of the war threw an immense number of seamen unprovided for upon the country, and in much greater numbers than could possibly in so short a time find employment in the merchant service. Great numbers of unemployed seamen accumulated at the outports, and particularly at Shields and Sunderland. On Saturday, the 16th of September, a general meeting was held on Cullercoats sands, when about 3,000 seamen were present, who agreed to demand of the shipowners that every ship should have a complement of five men and a boy for every hundred tons register admeasurement. On Wednesday, the 20th, another and a larger meeting was held at the same place, of the seamen from Shields, Sunderland, and Blyth, when, after consulting on the measures to be adopted, they separated without committing the

least outrage. The seamen at each of the ports organized themselves and proceeded to carry out their plans with great method; they visited the ships as they came in, and brought the men on shore, requiring them to join their brethren, under pain of having their faces blacked and their jackets turned, and being thus exhibited through the streets, with other contemptuous treatment. They observed the strictest discipline among themselves, and severely punished those who were guilty of any disturbance; they were mustered every morning, when the roll was called, and any absent without leave were fined; a watch was also set every night, by whom the streets were patrolled and cleared of any who were guilty of disorder. The trade of the port was entirely stopped for several weeks. The tars having it all their own way, not a ship had left the port. The ship-owners firmly resisted their demands, and at last took active measures in concert with the magistrates to get the ships to sea. On the 22nd October an attempt was made to get the *Lady Cathcart* to sea; her sails were all set, and her ropes ready to be cast off, when a number of the seamen who had been watching the proceeding jumped on board, lowered and stowed the sails, moored the ship, and kept possession till too late to get to sea. This was the culminating point of the strike; the arm of the law was brought to bear upon these engaged in this affair; warrants were obtained; some of the men were taken into custody; several magistrates came and summoned the householders to be sworn in as special constables. These now took up the work of the seamen in patrolling the streets; the force of the strike had expended itself,

and it at once collapsed. The men went to their ships, and things presently went on in their usual course. Two young seamen that were engaged in preventing the *Lady Cathcart* from going to sea were tried at the sessions, and found guilty of the charge alleged. One of them had just come home from a man-of-war, where he had fought in one of the unsuccessful combats with the Americans. On the trial he pleaded his services in the navy in mitigation of punishment, but in vain, they were both sentenced to serve some months in the house of correction.



CHAPTER VI.

House-building. "Blyth Gleaner." Local news. First Steam-boat. William Smith's discovery of South Shetland. Death of Mrs. Short. Mr. Thoburn. Mr. G. Hutchinson.

BLYTH being still the business part of the town it was preferred for shops. In 1815 there was quite a rage for building; till then there was only a part of the west side of Blagdon-street, and the east side of Sussex-street built, and between those half streets an unsightly row of old buildings stood, consisting of stables, butchers' shops, and two or three houses; these were pulled down, and in a short time the east side of Blagdon-street, and the west side of Sussex-street, and the shops uniting the two streets along the Wagon-hill, were erected. The old portion of the town has been little changed since then, except by the building of Bridge and Ridley streets, till the improvements that are at present being carried forward in Freehold and Eldon streets. But at Waterloo and Cowpen Quay there went on a constant increase of houses, till it has arrived at what we see it at the present day.

In 1816 Mr. Guthrie set up the first printing press in Blyth, in the attic of the house in which the writer has so long resided in Sussex-st. He commenced to publish a periodical entitled the "*Blyth Monthly Gleaner*," in June, 1817; it was continued until August, 1819. There is little in it to interest at the present time, except a few paragraphs about local matters, a few of which we will give as throwing light on the state of the town at that

period. In the first number he says, "Blyth is not devoid of antiquity, to make it interesting to the traveller, for there is yet to be seen, in a field contiguous to the Bedlington turnpike, the remains of an ancient encampment, which, after being intersected by Plessy wagon-way, again makes its appearance in a field behind the church. At the time the troops were in camp at Blyth several military gentlemen inspected this piece of antiquity, who were of opinion that it was the remains of an entrenched camp." The camp here noticed might have been seen exactly as it was then up to the present year when the east side of Eldon-street obliterated the greater portion of it. The south-eastern portion of it may still be seen in the pit field, a little way from Mr. Darling's garden. It is now impossible to make out by what people it was originally formed, but most probably by the Danes. September 1st: "Since the establishment of a lock-up house here the town is pretty well cleared of those numerous gangs of vagrants which lately infested it." Jan., 1819: "It is with unfeigned regret that we notice several disgraceful transactions which have recently been committed here; such as breaking windows, interrupting and ill-using females in the street, and various other outrages alike disgraceful to human nature. Unless a more efficient police be established, and part of the most active of the inhabitants accompany such police in their rounds, we fear every other means will prove abortive. Liberal rewards have been offered for the detection of those who broke the panes in the house of P. Holland, Esq., without effect;" there is an entire page of complaints. April—"The *Eleanor*, of

this port, is supposed to have been lost off Yarmouth, on the 3rd ultimo, as several pieces of wreck, and a boat marked '*Eleanor*, of Blyth,' have come on shore at that port. The following is a list of the unfortunate sufferers:—Robt. Downie, master, Henry Scaife, mate, Robt. Foreman, carpenter, James Boyd and George Robinson, seamen, Marshall, Humble, Spowart, Rutter, and Beamson, apprentices, George Lough, passenger." May 1st—"We are glad to have to notice the praiseworthy exertions of our churchwarden, in lately causing two individuals to be put into the lock-up house, for having been found tippling during divine service; and for having deterred numbers of boys from gathering together and playing at pitch-halfpenny on the Sundays. Upwards of £35 have been collected for the relief of the widows and children of the men recently lost on board the *Eleanor*. The rage for velocipedes still increases, and Blyth, since our last has got contaminated with the mania; four of these automata, the workmanship of their several proprietors, may be seen parading about the streets, managed with a dexterity that would do credit to any first-rate dandy of the metropolis!"

June 1st—"We are sorry to state that the *Jane*, of this port, a fine new vessel, on her first voyage, was totally lost on the 27th ult., near the Khol; the mate and four men were saved by a Norwegian vessel, and landed at Elsinore; but the master, William Richardson, was unfortunately drowned." In the next month is the following—"The recent loss of the *Jane*, of this port, will be fresh in the recollection of our readers. At that time a dog was on board, which, with the crew,

was picked up by a Norwegian vessel bound to Riga. This animal, called "Pincher," was given to the Norwegian captain by the mate of the *Jane*, and proceeded with the vessel to Riga, since which time nothing has been heard of the faithful animal, until last Monday evening, when he arrived at the residence of his late master at Blyth, much cut up by want, and seemingly long travelling."

June 1st, 1819—"Since our last there has been the greatest number of ships in Blyth harbour, that was ever known in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant. On the 8th ult. there were 67 sail: 64 laden, 2 in dock, and 1 in ballast. On account of the wind remaining some time in the south, the laden vessels could not get to sea, and several continuing to come in almost daily, caused such a grand display on the above day. A dinner was liberally given by the owners of Cowpen Colliery, at Mr. Bowers', to all the captains in the harbour, and the afternoon was spent in the most agreeable manner."

The owners of Cowpen Colliery in endeavouring to obviate the inconvenience of vessels not being able to get out of Blyth in a southerly wind, resolved to make an experiment with a steam-boat belonging Newcastle, to tow ships to sea. The boat arrived in the harbour between seven and eight in the morning of the 18th of June, 1819. In the forenoon, the *Resolution*, captain T. Hogg, coal laden, was towed as far as the outer beacon, to the great satisfaction of a number of spectators. A brig and a sloop, both laden, were towed to sea in the same style. The steamer then returned to

the quay, when a party of shipowners, &c., went on board, and spent the afternoon in great conviviality. The boat proceeded to Newcastle on the following morning, towing another laden vessel to sea. The *Gleaner* adds "In consequence of this successful experiment it is in contemplation to have a steam-boat for the use of the port, a measure which every well-wisher to the place must view with satisfaction." A steam-boat was soon after this procured. The *Dispatch* steamer came to Blyth in December, 1819, and her first job was towing to sea the *Brilliant*, G. Bulmer, master, and the *Richard and Ann*, Stephen Bergen, master.

Mr. William Smith had his name brought prominently before the public in 1820, by some naval officers on the coasts of South America reporting home that an Antarctic continent, or long series of Islands, of whose existence an ancient rumour is reported, had been discovered by Captain William Smith, of the brig, *William*, of Blyth. It had always been the custom for our trading vessels to keep as near as possible to Cape Horn, in passing into the Pacific. Mr. Smith, in a voyage from Monte Video to Valparaiso, rounded the Horn in a high southern latitude, and fell in with a line of coast, which he followed for two or three hundred miles, and which he named New South Shetland; he landed and took possession of it in the name of His Britannic Majesty. The extent of this group is from 54 to 65 west longitude, and from 61 to 64 south latitude. It consists of numerous islands without a vestige of vegetation, except a species of moss, and in a few solitary spots something resembling grass. The interior is

mountainous, and covered with eternal snow. A species of coal was found which burnt well. He passed large bays, which abounded in spermaceti whales; seals were extremely plentiful, and shrimps and penguins were numerous beyond description. The large islands are five in number. Some of the harbours are very good; vessels in them being land-locked. After landing at Valparaiso, he made his discovery known to the British naval authorities there, and a party of naval officers accompanied him in his vessel to verify and certify to his discovery, and New South Shetland has since appeared on the maps of the world. Mr. Smith was master of the *Lady Ridley* of Blyth, in 1801; he continued in her for some years, and in 1815 became part owner of the *William*; in this vessel he proceeded to South America. The Spanish possessions in South America had just thrown off the yoke of the mother country, and the ports of those extensive countries were opened to British ships and commerce. Smith engaged in this trade, and it was in one of his voyages into the Pacific that he made this discovery. No profit arose to him from his discovery, and after spending some years in trading to the ports of South America, he returned to Blyth a poorer man than when he left it. He afterwards became a North Sea pilot, and resided in London. I cannot conclude this account of Smith without noticing the strange circumstances under which a daughter of his met her death. She was the wife of Mr. Christopher Short. Having no family, Mrs. S. went to sea with her husband for many years, and had thus visited most parts of the world. Short was master of the *Mary Florence*, and was

taking a cargo of coals to Aden; they had nearly reached their port, when the ship grounded two miles south of Gaurdifu, on the African side of the entrance to the Red Sea. The chief officer's account of the affair is as follows:—We remained by the wreck three days, during which time the natives appeared friendly; capt. Short, fearing the ship might go to pieces, sent me on shore to receive his wife; after Mrs. S. came on shore, I left her with the second officer, the steward, and three seamen, and went on board and had some conversation with capt. S.; I returned on shore with one of the chronometers; in about half an hour I tried again to go on board, but the natives cut the line, and let me into the surf: I was making all haste towards the beach, when I met Mrs. S. wading up to the knees in the water, crying, and telling me that the natives had taken the rings off her fingers, and had chased her into the sea. I then swam out towards the wreck, and hailed for them to send a boat, which they did, but without any one in her and without oars, however, we put Mrs. S. into her, and tried to pull off with the loose thwarts and the keel planks. After getting pretty well through the surf, the boat unfortunately swamped; I then got hold of Mrs. S. and tried to swim to land with her, but a heavy sea parted us; as soon as I could I turned round to see what had become of her, but it now being dark I saw nothing more of her; I then did my utmost to reach the shore, which I was enabled to do, thank God. I now found that the steward and one seaman were all that were saved, Mrs. S. and the others having met a watery grave. On the day after this Mr. Short left the wreck in the long boat

with that portion of the crew that had remained on board, without seeking any intercourse with those on shore, and, of course, ignorant of what had become of Mrs. S. and the people that were with her. He directed his course to Aden, where the chief officer joined him a month afterwards, and told him of the fate of his wife. Christopher Short was a native of Blyth, and belonged to a branch of the family of the Shorts of the Link-end. After the above mishap he gave up the sea, and became an examiner in the Local Marine Board at Newcastle.

No history of Blyth would be complete without an ample notice of Mr. James Thoburn, who gained and held by his commanding talents and consistent character, a leading position in the town for many years. The following is from the obituary notices in the *Tyne Mercury*, December 3rd, 1833: "At Blyth, on the 24th ult., after a short illness, aged 56, Mr. James Thoburn. He was a man of great intellectual endowments, a good mathematician, and his literary attainments enabled him to contribute to many periodical works of the day. His urbanity of manners made him easy of access, and to the complaints of the indigent he ever lent a willing ear, enjoying the reward of self-approval, when, by his benevolent exertions the orphan's welfare had been promoted, or the widow's wrongs had been redressed. In all the domestic relationships of life his deportment was endearing and affectionate, and in his commerce with mankind guiding himself at all times by the strictest principles of integrity and truth; he has gone down to the grave honoured, beloved, and regretted by his family and a large circle of friends. In the removal of

such an estimable man, Blyth has suffered an irreparable loss. Mr. Thoburn's intellect was of a high order, improved by study and observation. His views were enlightened and liberal. He employed a considerable portion of his leisure in early life to the acquisition of mathematical knowledge, and his attainments in this noble science, as estimated by able judges, were highly respectable; and he never omitted befriending to the utmost extent of his power such deserving young men as were engaged in his favourite pursuit. His great experience in business, extensive commercial information, intimate acquaintance with the nature and management of shipping property, expertness in calculation, sound judgment and unimpeachable integrity, accompanied by a disposition peculiarly friendly and obliging, greatly enlarged the sphere of his usefulness, and justly procured for him the confidence and respect of his fellow townsmen, and all with whom he was connected. Mr. Thoburn possessed more than an ordinary share of that virtuous sensibility which leads us to take a deep interest in the happiness of others. In his domestic and social relationships he was singularly amiable—an affectionate husband, an indulgent father, a generous relation, a kind neighbour, a humane and considerate master. These excellencies of character, it is but justice to say, were in Mr. Thoburn, sustained and adorned by genuine, solid, unostentatious piety. The writer of this paragraph speaks from personal knowledge when he states, that although Mr. Thoburn carried on an extensive commercial correspondence, he seldom wrote or answered letters on the Sabbath, and that numerous as his engagements

were, his attention to the public duties of this sacred day were in a high degree regular and exemplary. May the example of our departed friends make a suitable impression upon our minds!"

The following is from the *Northumberland Advertiser*, of December 10th, 1833:—"The remains of the late Mr. James Thoburn were interred in Horton churchyard, on Wednesday last. The funeral procession, consisting of a number of mourning coaches and other vehicles, and followed by many gentlemen on horseback, left Waterloo-place a little after one o'clock, amidst a large concourse of the inhabitants of Blyth and neighbourhood, who had long respected the worth and appreciated the usefulness, of the deceased. The usual service was performed in an impressive manner by the Rev. Mr. Thompson; the remains were then deposited in the vault prepared for them, to the evident and deep regret of all present."

It would be ungrateful in the writer to omit the name of William Grieves Hutchinson, who commenced his labours as a schoolmaster shortly after the commencement of the present century and for more than thirty years conducted a large and flourishing school in the town. at the period of his death the larger portion of the male population either were or had been his pupils. His system of teaching was very simple, but in his hands proved remarkably efficient. If a boy under his teaching had any capacity for learning he was sure to bring it out. But then he ruled the school after the olden fashion; he had not then dreamt of conducting a school without the use of the *tawse*: and truly it was no trifle

to the boy who received a flagellation with tawse wielded by his long and vigorous arm ! During his lifetime the presentation of a testimonial in acknowledgment of his successful labours as a teacher was spoken about, but the project failed. This slight notice by an old pupil is intended to preserve a little longer from oblivion the name of a man who, though he did not die rich, conferred higher benefits on the town than did any of those who made fortunes in it. The first school he occupied has long since disappeared : it was a shabby wooden erection little superior to an Irish hedge school.



CHAPTER VII.

Religion in Blyth. Chapel at Newsham. Oliverian survey. Church-wardens' presentment. Catholics presented. Blyth Church built. Ministers. Nonconformity. Ministers. Chapel built, 1814. Broadbelt causes a division. Burgher congregation. Chapel built, 1828. Mr. Carmichael. Messrs. Heron, Johnston, and Robertson; Mr. Reid. Introduction of Methodism. Chapel on the Quay. Wesleyan Chapel. New Connexion Chapel. Primitives. Wesleyan Free Church. Roman Catholic Chapel.

I HAVE discovered no trace of any place of religious worship, or means of religious instruction in Blyth prior to 1751. In times antecedent to that date, however, there was a Catholic chapel attached to the mansion house at Newsham, where no doubt the inhabitants of Blyth would worship. This chapel was standing in 1586, when the house was occupied by John Ogle, but nothing is said about a priest being then attached to it. The Delaval family continued till about this time to keep a chaplain, and a clause in a will made by Sir John Delaval in 1655, may throw some light on how the chapel may have been supplied. The clause reads thus: "I will that Sir Richard Anderson, clerk and chaplain, have meat and drink with my son John Delaval, and also for doing duty during his natural life, four pounds, six shillings, and eightpence; and if he shall be, by age, or otherwise devedged, or blind, to have his meat and drink, and the same annual stipend, of four pounds, six shillings, and eightpence, while he liveth."

This Sir John Delaval appears to have remained in connexion with the Roman Catholic church, and as the

few inhabitants of Newsham and Blyth Nook continued till more than a century after in favour of the old faith, there is no doubt that Sir John's chaplain would attend to their spiritual wants.

At this time began to be enacted those terrible penal laws against the Roman Catholic religion, which were not finally abolished till the reign of George IV; popish priests were banished the kingdom, and those who harboured or relieved them were guilty of felony. Many were executed in consequence of these severe edicts. A mere summary of the laws against Roman Catholics, under forty-six heads, occupies 77 octavo pages in Burns' Ecclesiastical Law! The "wisdom of our ancestors" deemed such laws necessary to the safety of the state. Certainly on no other ground, *if on that*, could they be defended. About a hundred years after this, and during the Commonwealth, there took place what has been termed the "Oliverian survey," a sort of commission that was employed in ascertaining what provision existed for the religious instruction of the people of Northumberland. The case of Blyth was considered at an inquisition taken at Morpeth, on the 1st of June, 1650, before William Fenwick, Ralph Delaval, William Shaftoe, Henry Ogle, John Hall, and Luke Killingworth. As the result of their inquiries, they advised an arrangement that would have connected Blyth with the chapelry of Horton. "That the chapelry of Horton is belonging to the parish of Woodhorn, and the cure thereof supplied by Mr. Mephram, and is worth £18 at present, but hath formerly been worth £30; that by reason of the commodious situation of the said chapel

it may fitly be made a parish church of itself, and the chapelry of Cramlington, and the town of Newsham and Blyth Nook, belonging unto but far distant from the parish church at Earsdon added to it." The great distance of Earsdon from Blyth, seven miles, must have prevented any great number going thence to church; and if ever so disposed, there was great irregularity of pastoral labour at Earsdon. In the Oliverian survey of 1650, it is stated respecting Earsdon, "the stipend thereof is four pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence, from fee farm rents, but *no present incumbent there.*" In 1662, we have the same complaint in a presentment made by the churchwardens. It is a singular picture of the spiritual state of the entire parish, in which was the residence of one of the members of parliament for the county, Ralph Delaval, esq., and four or five other families of considerable landed property. The presentment runs thus: "Concerning ministers, preachers, and lecturers, we have not had a minister these two years. Concerning parish clerk and sexton, we have no clerk by reason we want a minister. We have a man to look to the church and keep it clean, and lock the doors. We have neither physician nor chirurgeon within our chapelry; we have a midwife, Margaret, the wife of George Berteron, of Seghill, which is not licensed according to our knowledge; we have one poor man." The next year Philip Cramlington, of Newsham, Thomas Cramlington, of the same place, and Edward Jubb, of Blyth, are presented as papists by the churchwardens of Earsdon, at the archdeacon's visitation. When the Protestant church was doing so little towards instructing

the people, it might have been expected the Catholics would have been let alone, but not so; even up to 1715 they continued thus to be annoyed. The doctrine that it is wrong to persecute is a modern one; it was a long time before men worked their way to the truth, that it is a sin and a crime to punish others for conscience' sake.

In 1706 we have an account of papists in the ward of Newsham, George Errington and Madame Errington, Mary Blakey, Mary Graim, Philip Jubb, Jeane Achyson, John Robeyson and wife and sons. And in 1715 the names of Francis Welton, of Link-house, gentleman; and William Silvertop, gentleman, of South Blyth; occur with John Burlinson, also of South Blyth, yeoman, in a list of papists and non-jurors who refused to take the oaths.

Blyth Church was built by the Ridley family, in the year 1751, as a Chapel of Ease to the parish church of Earsdon, and for the convenience of the inhabitants of Blyth. It was opened for Divine worship by the Rev. Mr. Mattinson, curate of All Saints, Newcastle, in the August of that year, his sermon on the occasion being preached from the 84th Psalm, 10th verse—"I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." The first minister was the Rev. Joseph Wood; he was succeeded by the Rev. John Thompson, who received his first half-year's salary of £20 on the 11th May, 1761, and continued "passing rich on £40 a-year" to the termination of his long ministry in 1810. He married a daughter of Mr. George Marshall, and was a respectable man, maintaining during the whole period of his ministry an un-

blemished reputation. A tomb-stone is erected to his memory by the members of the congregation, on which is the following inscription: "To the Memory of the late Rev. John Thompson this stone is dedicated by the inhabitants of Blyth, in grateful remembrance of his many virtues, piety, and learning; who for the space of 49 years devoted the whole of his useful labours for their benefit and instruction. He died May 10th, 1810, aged 76." His successor was the Rev. Mr. Rix, who was esteemed as an attractive preacher, but soon left. The Rev. Robert Greenwood then became minister, and continued till his death, which took place on December 30th, 1859, at the advanced age of 82. He was a man of considerable learning, and of a most amiable and kind disposition, though exceedingly retired in his habits. He had a venerable and, to the last, handsome appearance. During the whole of his prolonged ministry he was held in very great and deserved respect. He was succeeded by the Rev. William Greenwell, M. A., whose zealous and active pastorate has already resulted in a greatly improved congregation; another result we trust will soon follow—the erection of a handsome New Church. This has not yet been accomplished. The present Chaplain is the Rev. David Thomas Jones.

We cannot state with exactness when the first Non-conformist Congregation was gathered in Blyth, but in 1786 there was a Presbyterian minister in the town named Craig, who, in addition to his ministerial work, taught a school somewhere near the Queen's lane. Their first meeting place was in the first house on the

left hand after leaving the street to go to Mr. Smith's Ropery. In 1790, Mr. Ochiltree, who resided at Seaton Sluice, and was pastor over a congregation there, also preached at Blyth. After this, a Mr. Blyth was pastor over the two congregations; he was at Hartley, in June, 1791, as appears by a newspaper paragraph of that date: "We hear that Mr. James Blyth, son of the Rev. Mr. Blyth, of Hartley, underwent an examination at Surgeons' Hall, London, on the 5th ult., and on the 27th by the Physicians of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich, for a Surgeon in the Royal Navy, when he acquitted himself with great applause." In 1804, Mr. Blyth had either died or left, as there was no minister in Blyth at that time; and the Methodists of the New Connexion were for some time allowed the use of the preaching room. Then a Mr. Whitfield ministered for some little time, and was succeeded by Mr. Robertson, who came as an Independent. Mr. R. was a native, and free burgess of Newcastle; he was educated at Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca. After being a few years in Blyth he went to London, and collected among the Independents there the money with which in 1814 he built the chapel. In 1820 there was a split from his congregation, headed by a preacher named Broadbelt who was visiting at Mr. R.'s house. Broadbelt died in a very few weeks afterwards. The seceders were persuaded by a person who had been brought up among the Burghers to apply to that denomination for a supply of preaching. They did so, and had a preaching place first at Crofton, and afterwards, for several years, in two rooms of a house at Cowpen

Quay which Mr. Jobson fitted up for them. During these years they had no regular minister but were supplied with probationers. The chapel at Waterloo was opened for Divine worship January 6th, 1828, by the Rev. Mr. Gilmore, of North Shields, and the Rev. Mr. Lawson of South Shields. The late Rev. Daniel Carmichael was the first minister; he was ordained June 8th, 1829, after he had supplied the pulpit for some time. For a period of 31 years he laboured with acceptance and increasing usefulness. He was a good preacher, and, until the failure of his health, an energetic one; but perhaps his usefulness was owing in its greatest measure to his personal character. He was a man of very fine spirit; kind, generous, and catholic. Kindness was his greatest power, with which he not merely won the respect but the strong and affectionate attachment of his people, and indeed of all who knew him. As a proof of this feeling towards him, on Monday, June 8th, 1850, being the twenty-first anniversary of his ordination, the Rev. W. Oscar Johnston, of the English Presbyterian church, and captain Henry Taylor, waited upon him at his residence, and in the name and on behalf of a number of his friends and neighbours, of all religious denominations, presented with their congratulations a purse containing thirty-five sovereigns, as a token, though altogether inadequate, of their affection and esteem. Mr. Carmichael gratefully acknowledged the gift, at the same time expressing the pleasure he felt in its not being contributed by his own congregation alone, but by Christians of every name. He suffered much during the last eight or ten years of his life, and died March

6th, 1860. Mr. Craig, his successor, was ordained March 12th, 1861.

After the division in 1820, to which I have referred, Mr. Robertson's congregation remained very small for many years; until Mr. Heron became his assistant, when for a time it improved, and a gallery was put into the chapel; but as neither of these gentlemen were remarkable for pulpit power the congregation again dwindled down, and might have died out entirely, but at the time of the disruption in the Scotch Kirk Mr. Heron accepted the offer of a living in Scotland, and Mr. Johnston became pastor. Mr. Robertson was by this time incapacitated through age from active labour. He died in June, 1846, aged 84. He is well remembered by all the old, and many of the younger, inhabitants as "Old Priest Robertson." The old gentleman had some eccentricities; one was that of attending all, or nearly all, funerals, invited or uninvited. He had, however, always paid his visits during the last sickness, and he seemed as if he considered his particular mission to be that of visiting the sick and seeing the dead to their last resting place. Another eccentricity was tapping everybody he met on the shoulder with his stick,—in a very friendly way, of course, though not always very gently. During the ministry of Mr. Johnston there was some improvement effected in the state of the church and congregation, but the better days and present position of the church date their commencement from the coming of the present respected pastor, the Rev. John Reid, A.M. He was ordained February 11th, 1852, and during his pastorate the chapel has been re-built and greatly

enlarged ; a house has also been purchased as a residence for the minister, and of late a school-room has been erected for day and sabbath school purposes.

We now come to the history of Methodism in the town. John Wesley had finished his life of usefulness and entered his reward before more than one solitary attempt had been made to introduce Methodism into Blyth. This is the more remarkable, as Mr. Wesley himself, the first time he visited the north, planted a society at Plessy. In his Journal, we find he visited Plessy on Good Friday, 1743. He also writes, "On Easter Monday and Tuesday I preached there again, the congregation constantly increasing : and as most of those had never in their lives pretended to any religion of any kind they were the more ready to cry to God, as mere sinners, for the redemption which is in Jesus." In the same year we find the following entry : "July 17th, Sunday. I preached, as I had done the Wednesday before, to my favourite congregation at Plessy, on 'Him hath God exalted with his own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.' I then joined a little company of them together, who desire repentance and remission of sins." At Hartley a society had been established at an early date, and from thence the first effort was made to introduce Methodism into Blyth. The first preacher who came was John Grundell, afterwards so well known and highly esteemed as a preacher in the Methodist New Connexion. Mr. G., though blind, was a young man of good information on most subjects, and mighty in the scriptures ; and having great zeal and a commanding voice and manner he received invitations

to visit almost all the places within several miles of Sunderland, his place of residence. In 1783, when on a visit to Hartley, he was conducted by Mr. Cooper, a highly esteemed class-leader of that place, to Blyth, where he had the honour to preach the first Methodist sermon the people of that town had the privilege to hear.

This effort, however, was not followed up, and several years elapsed before anything more was done. At length the Plessy Methodists turned their attention to Blyth, and occasionally sent a preacher. From 1791 to 1796 Messrs. Hunter, Atmore, Gaulter, Furness, and Kilham, visited the town and preached. The preacher usually came on the Sabbath morning, accompanied by a few friends from Plessy, and preached before church hours. Mr. Hunter took his stand beside the church gate, and preached from "Godliness is profitable unto all things," &c. It would doubtless be a labour of love to him to speak to the people of Blyth about the advantages of godliness; both place and people would remind him of times long gone by. He was well known in the town in his early days, having, before he became an itinerant preacher, followed the humble occupation of a coal waggoner between Plessy and Blyth. William Hunter, then quite a youth, was one of the little company whom Mr. Wesley united in Christian fellowship in Plessy, in 1743. After preaching for several years in his own neighbourhood Mr. Wesley employed him as an itinerant preacher, and in this capacity he endured a large share of the hardships, and was encouraged with a large measure of the wonderful success, which attended the labours of the first race of Methodist preachers. There

is an account of Mr. Hunter in Jackson's "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers." When Mr. Atmore preached it was a damp morning, and old James Matthewson (afterwards of the Black Bull) having charge of the brewery offered the malt-mill in which to hold the service; the offer was accepted, and hence the brew-house was the first building in which Methodist service was conducted. Mr. Atmore's text was, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Mr. Gaultier preached in the long room of the Star and Garter, and Mr. Furness stood at the corner of the brew-house and preached from "Prepare to meet thy God." The inhabitants came out to the services in considerable numbers, listened attentively, and behaved with great decorum, but always kept at a respectful distance. For several years, however, nothing was done towards gathering a regular society, or establishing regular preaching. About this time Cowpen Colliery was opened, which gave a great impetus to trade, and brought a large accession to the population of the neighbourhood. It was amongst these new comers Methodism made its first friends, and where the first society was formed. In the summer of 1796 Mr. Kilham preached in Cowpen-square; and under his discourse a female named Jane Atkinson was converted. This was the first fruit of the Methodist ministry in the neighbourhood. Among those who had recently come into the neighbourhood was Mr. John Weatherburn, who had been for some time a Methodist, and now finding himself surrounded by a large and increasing population, with

little or no provision for their spiritual wants (for even the casual visits from Plessy had ceased), he, with commendable zeal, sought, though unsuccessfully, to get Blyth upon the preachers' plan to be supplied in the usual way.

Shortly after this the Methodist New Connexion was formed, and the first quarterly meeting of the Newcastle circuit was held at Morpeth. Mr. Weatherburn being acquainted with many of the friends who had united in the new itinerancy, went to the quarterly meeting in the hope of getting regular preaching to Blyth. His application met with a hearty response from the brethren assembled, and Blyth was at once put on the circuit plan. He was appointed leader, and was at once joined by Jane Atkinson. Those two worthy persons engaged in the enterprize of forming the first Methodist society in the neighbourhood; the first preaching place they obtained was a cottage in Cowpen-square, kindly granted them by the late Mr. Rd. Hodgson. Here the society speedily increased, and considerable good was done. The Wesleyans had formed a society, and established regular preaching, soon after the New Connexion, and like them held their services in the outskirts of the town—Crofton, North Farm, &c.; but in 1804 they got the occupancy of a building on the quay adjoining the Dun Cow Inn. The rent of the place was, however, £5 a-year, besides which it needed considerable outlay to make it fit for the reception of a congregation, and wisely judging that in this case union would be strength, they invited the New Connection to share the expense and the occupancy. This arrangement turned out well for the cause of Methodism

in the town. The place when fitted up with forms was capable of sitting 250 people; and each section had two sermons on every alternate Sunday from the circuit preacher, which made an excellent supply. The congregation soon filled the place, many of the principal families were attracted to the Methodist meeting house. Mr. Richard Hodgson and family, Mr. Edmund Watta, and a Mr. and Mrs. Bury, became members of the New Connexion. Mr. Bury was a shipowner, and had married a sister of Richard Hodgson's; he afterwards went to Worthing, in Sussex, where he had an estate left him. Mr. William Briggs and Mr. James Thoburn were also regular attendants.

The Wesleyans and New Connexionists continued to worship together till 1815, when the former left to occupy their new chapel. An excellent feeling had subsisted between the two parties while together, and they now separated in peace each to pursue their own work. The Wesleyan chapel was opened by the Rev. A. E. Farrar, July, 1815. After the separation of the two sections of course the congregation in the old meeting house was greatly thinned; but they speedily increased, and became even larger than before, and on the 6th September, 1818, the New Connexion entered upon their new chapel at Waterloo, the opening services being conducted by the Revs. A. Scott and Jos. Manners, and Mr. Joseph Clark.

The Primitive Methodists first visited Blyth in 1826. Mr. Clowes, and John and Thomas Nelson, preached. They got the old Presbyterian preaching room fitted up for worship, but did not succeed in drawing a congrega-

tion, and soon after left the place. Ten years afterwards they made another effort, and got a chapel built at Cowpen Quay. The second effort was not permanently successful—the chapel was sold, and is now a beer-house. In 1849 they built another chapel in a more eligible position—and more recently still a larger one. Their's is now the only place of worship on Cowpen Quay.

In the Wesleyan Conference of 1849 arose a dispute, followed by a prolonged agitation respecting "Question by Penalty," and resulting in a secession. Part of the seceders united themselves to the Wesleyan Association, which body subsequently adopted the name of, United Methodist Free Churches. They established religious services at Cowpen Quay, in two rooms occupied by the Primitives before building their second chapel, and ultimately entered upon their own chapel at Waterloo.

Blyth presents a capital example of the power of the voluntary principle to provide religious instruction for the population, while the parochial system has utterly failed to meet the case. Within the past ten years each denomination (with only one exception) has built a new place of worship, a list of which, though rather a repetition, we subjoin in chronological order:

Methodist Free Church. Built a chapel which they entered upon at Christmas, 1860.

Roman Catholic. Beautiful chapel built at Waterloo and dedicated to Our Blessed Lady and St. Wilfrid. It was solemnly opened on the 22nd October, 1862, when Pontifical High Mass was performed by the Right Rev. William Hogarth. D.D., Lord Bishop of Hexham.

United Presbyterian. This church was opened Dec-

ember 10th, 1863, when the Rev. Dr. Cairns, of Berwick, preached from Revelation xix, 9. It cost about £2,600. The foundation stone was laid Dec. 24th, 1861, by a son of Hugh Taylor, Esq., of Backworth.

Established Church. The church of S. Mary built at Waterloo, opened on the 14th June, 1864, consecrated by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Durham as a chapel of ease to the parish church of Horton.

Methodist New Connexion. Foundation stone of a new chapel laid June 6th, 1865, by Abraham Pilling, Esq., of Bolton; opened for divine worship Sept. 6th, 1866. The first sermon was preached by the Rev. John Hudston, of Leeds, from verses v and vi, of the 116th Psalm. Cost of chapel and schools £2800.

Congregationalists. This chapel was opened for divine worship November 12th, 1868, when the Rev. W. Thomas, of Leeds, preached.

Primitive Methodist. This commodious new chapel was opened November 22nd, 1868, when sermons were preached by the Rev. L. A. Bastow, of Gateshead.

Wesleyan. The foundation stone of this large chapel was laid September 17th, 1867, by the Rev. Robert Haworth, of Gateshead, as proxy for Hugh Taylor, Esq., of Chipchase castle. Opened February 16th, 1869, by the Rev. Samuel Romily Hall, President of the Conference. Text, first sermon, Chapel cost £2900, and a fine organ, £200 additional.

£15,000 will be an approximation to the cost involved in the above erections. The only denomination not represented is the *English Presbyterian*, who nevertheless are contemplating a new building.

CHAPTER VIII.

Link-end. Fishing. Richard Twizell. The "English Hero." Blyth's Unlucky Day. Four Pilots drowned. Richard Robinson. Three Ships lost. First Life-boat disaster. Loss of the "Speedwell." Loss of the "Prosperity." Great Gale of 1831. Second Life-boat Disaster.

THE Link-end has been inhabited by fishermen from a very remote period, and was long the most important place on the lower part of the river. Adam Fitz-Geoffrey claimed the fishery at Blume, in connection with the Newsham estate, but the name has long since passed away, and we have not anything to direct us to where the fishery of Blume was situated. Down to 1723 the fishery was let for £5 10s. per annum, at which time Richard Nicholson was tenant. In the account of Bedlingtonshire, contained in the Boldon Book, 1183, frequent mention is made of the bishop's tenants being required to prepare for the fishery; this would probably refer chiefly to salmon fishing, a fish that in former times was plentiful in the Blyth. Tradition says the monks at Tynemouth had a fishing station at Cowpen, and certainly they had tithe of the fish taken at Blithe and Hartley, which on the 31st December, 1536, was farmed by John de la Val, and Richard Watson, curate of Earsdon, at 20s. yearly, at the King's will. It is known that herrings were caught on these coasts at a very early period, and as that fish would then, as now, frequent our bays to spawn the Link-end would be a favourable position for conducting that fishery. In the 17th century William Hartwell and

Ben Hilton had a twenty-one years' lease of the bishop's fishing in the river Blyth, with leave to hang up and dry their nets on the banks of the said water. During the whole of last century fishing was carried on to a much greater extent than at present, for besides providing for home consumption large quantities of salted cod-fish were sent to the London market. After the close of the great French war an attempt was made to extend the fishing trade of the port, two keel boats were fitted out with crews of five men each: the men employed were seamen, most of whom in their youth had been fisher lads. At that time a new branch of the fishing trade begun, the catching of brats, a fish akin to the turbot. A London company entered into a contract with the fishermen to pay them 3s. 6d. a-piece for all the full-sized brats they caught and delivered on board the company's smacks, one of which was in daily attendance off the port; but the earnings of these boats failing sufficiently to remunerate the parties engaged the enterprise was abandoned. Since then a great number of boats have, in some years, engaged in the herring fishery: but even this important branch of the trade is not carried on to the extent nor with the spirit of former times, and the white fishing has almost come to an end; so that instead of Blyth supplying the neighbouring population with fish, the chief of its own supply comes from Newbiggin.

There have been several disasters among the fishermen. The earliest one of which there is any record occurred on the great storm of 1st April, 1743, when three fishing boats belonging to Blyth were lost, with their crews.

On the morning of the 22nd of April, 1769, Richard Twizell, pilot, Blyth, with two of his sons, and a man named Short, proceeded to the fishing ground to their great lines: while busied with their fishing a dreadful storm arose from a direction that prevented their return to port, and such was its severity, and so extraordinary the amount of labour they had to endure, that they soon became exhausted. About twelve o'clock Twizell's eldest son died; the storm continued with unabated fury, and at four o'clock John Short died. There now only remained Twizell and his youngest son surviving; and Twizell, with the view of lightening the boat, and so increasing the probability of their weathering the tempest, proposed to cast the dead bodies into the sea, but the lad, who was thirteen years of age, cried and besought his father to let them remain. The father was overcome by the lad's entreaties, and yielded to his wish. Shortly after, while baling water out of the boat, the lad fell overboard, but his father caught him by the clothes and succeeded in getting him into the boat again. The lad had borne up bravely until this mishap, after which he never lifted his head, and at six o'clock he also died. Twizell was now the only survivor, and the weather continued as tempestuous as ever. The strength of the hardy old man was now greatly reduced by twelve hours' toil and exposure to such a pitiless storm, the night was drawing on, and well might he fear that he would never see another morning. Happily as the night wore on the storm abated, and a shift of wind took him towards the shore, and when daylight dawned he was descried off Hauxley

by the fishermen, who perceiving that there was something amiss with the boat went off to his assistance, but were horrified to find three of the crew dead, and the fourth more dead than alive, for by this time Twizell had sunk into a state of unconsciousness, though he still held the oars in his hands, and made a feeble effort to row. The boat was landed at Hauxley, and prompt and energetic measures were taken to restore the old man, which after some time were crowned with success; when able to be removed he was taken home on horse-back, and the bodies removed to Blyth in the boat. Twizell was about fifty years of age, and his eldest son twenty-one; both had served on board a man-of-war. Short was an industrious young man, and the support of his parents. Twizell lived to be a very old man; the present Mr. John Twizell is his great grand-son.

In the beginning of 1785 a most destructive storm ravaged the coasts of Northumberland and Durham. At sea the effects of the storm were dreadful beyond description; a very large number of ships were upon the coast, and the wind being accompanied by a very heavy fall of snow, the seamen could not see their way into the harbours, and as the vessels could not be kept to windward, there was no alternative but to run on shore. For more than a hundred miles the coast was strewn with wrecked and stranded vessels; between Alnmouth and the Coquet eleven lay on the beach, in addition to what had foundered. Happily the whole of the crews of these eleven were saved. Fifteen were on shore to the north of Alnmouth, and between Coquet Island and Cresswell point thirty lay in utter ruin. At Blyth, the

English Hero, belonging to the Tyne, was driven on shore; ten of the crew entered the boat, and all perished. Two boys were left on board, one of whom went to prayer, and when the storm abated was found asleep in the cabin, as calm and serene as if no danger were near. A poor man walking on the sands discovered a dead body; on examining the pockets he found £18; having procured assistance he had the body conveyed to the church-yard to await identification, and the money he placed in proper hands, for delivery to his friends should any appear.

A great gale and snow-storm occurred April 1, 1799, when the *John*, of Shields, came on shore behind the point-end, and the entire crew were drowned.

On the 14th of January, 1802, the fishing boats, when on the fishing ground, were overtaken by a storm, and in running for the harbour one of the boats was upset, and a man named Easterby drowned—he was the last male of an old Blyth family. On the 14th of January, 1805, a pilot-boat, when in the act of boarding the *Medea*, of Lynn, in the “bight,” was upset, and the crew, William Watts, Robert Redford, John Hedley, and James Nicholson, were lost. Again, on the 14th of January, 1808, the fishing boats were caught in a storm when fishing. One of the boats remaining to haul her lines was, when she did come away, unable to reach the harbour; the wind was from the north-east, with a very large tide and heavy sea, when it was seen from the shore that the boat, with the utmost effort of the crew, could not gain the harbour. A boat, manned with six men, Thomas Tulley, James Redford, John Hossack

Thomas Short, James Short, and James Twizell, went out to render help; but after reaching the struggling boat, and making an attempt to bring her into port, such had become the fury of the wind and sea that both boats were driven among the broken water, a little to the southward of the harbour, and every soul perished, and in the presence of hundreds of people who were anxiously watching the heart-rending scene of nine fine fellows exerting all their skill and straining every nerve to escape a death that appeared every moment more imminent; but vain was the help of man, after a most heroic struggle of three hours they were at length overpowered. The names of the three men in the first boat were Richard Robinson, pilot, his son Richard, and his brother-in-law, John Burn. These three disasters having all happened on the 14th of January, it was long afterwards considered Blyth's unlucky day; and the fishermen never ventured to sea on that day for many following years. Richard Robinson's father and two brothers were lost on the same day; they were Newbiggin fishermen; seven other men belonging to Newbiggin were lost on the same occasion, making a total of nineteen belonging to Blyth and Newbiggin. £1,701 was promptly subscribed, chiefly in Newcastle and neighbourhood, for their widows, orphans, and other dependants, in all 90 persons. The distribution of this charity was entrusted to a committee of gentlemen, who discharged their trust with care and judgment. John Robinson, afterwards well known as the master and owner of the *Rosehill*, was the son of Richard Robinson,

The Rev. Henry Cotes, vicar of Bedlington, published

a volume of poetry, in which is a Poem on this disaster, but want of space precludes an extract.

It was felt by all who witnessed the above distressing scene that had the brave men who went to the rescue of Robinson and his companions been furnished with a life-boat instead of a coble all would have ended well, and without the loss of a single life. This conviction led to measures being taken to procure a life-boat, which soon after was accomplished.

On the 11th of February, 1807, the *Leviathan*, the *Dorothy*, and the *Dorothy's Increase*, were all lost in a gale of wind, with the whole of their crews. The *Leviathan* had been a Greenlander, and together with the *Dorothy* belonged to Mr. Manners, and neither of them were insured. The *Dorothy's Increase*, a pink-sterned barque, belonged to Mr. Colvin, of Crofton.

On the morning of April 7th, 1810, the morning being fine and the sea smoother than it had been for several days, a number of Cullercoats fishermen launched their boats and went off to their great lines. Whilst employed at their fishing a sudden storm broke over them, and they had to hasten towards the shore to find shelter, but were driven to leeward of Cullercoats, the wind blowing from the E.S.E., with a heavy sea. They were seen off Hartley in great peril; the Blyth life-boat was sent for and obtained; a number of people accompanied her. The boat was manned by a crew of seventeen men, and put off just by Hartley Bates; she was gallantly rowed through the breakers, and reached the cobles. She took eleven men out of the cobles, and such was the confidence of the crew in her capabilities

that they also took on board a considerable quantity of the fishing tackle ; having thus far succeeded in their mission of mercy the question arose among the crew as to where they were to land ; the majority were for landing where they launched from ; others wished to run down to Blyth, which they could have easily and safely done in less than an hour ; unhappily the former opinion prevailed, and they attempted to land on the beach. On coming among the breakers a high and ridgy wave broke into the boat, severely injuring the steersman and stoving the boat almost to pieces ; still she floated. Another heavy wave followed when she was nearing the shore, and being under no command she struck the ground, splitting nearly in two ; the cork floated and the fragments were entirely dispersed. In an instant twenty-eight men were struggling in the surf, in the sight, and within a few yards, of fully 2,000 people, many of whom saw a father, a husband, or a brother perishing before their eyes, without being able to render them the smallest aid. Thomas Brown, the son of a Hartley pilot, was so nearly saved that he obtained footing just opposite where his father was standing ; they each recognised the other, and the father, crying, "O my son, Tom, come to me!" hastened to help him ; when they had nearly met the back-sweep of a wave carried the young man to sea again, where he was overpowered, and ultimately perished. In a few moments the death-struggle was over, only two men escaped with life, twenty-six having met a watery grave. Nine of those who were lost belonged to Blyth, viz : Henry Short, Duncan Stewart, John Hall, Thos. Turn-

bull, John Dobie, Wm. Oliver, Wm. Todd, Joseph Partis, and Matthew Jefferson. Short, Stewart, Dobie, and Oliver were buried in Blyth church-yard on Monday, the 9th of April. Henry Short commanded the boat, and was a fine good-looking man, and a gallant and skilful seaman. He was the youngest of five brothers, at that time pilots at Blyth, when there were but twelve pilots attached to the port: he had swam to the beach, but being too much exhausted to rise he expired before he was discovered. Duncan Stewart also reached the beach, but being driven with great violence against a rock he died. Duncan was an excellent swimmer; a few years before this he had been at sea off Blyth in a pilot boat; on returning he was alone in the boat, towards a stern of a ship; when crossing the bar the boat filled with water and sunk, leaving him to swim for his life. He managed to disencumber himself of his pea jacket, and after almost superhuman efforts he reached a place where he obtained footing; there he remained till a boat was sent to his rescue from the upper part of the harbour. Short and Stewart were married men, and left large families; the others were single, and all quite young. John Hall was eldest brother to the present Mrs. James Darling. Matthew Jefferson was cousin to the writer; the others have no relations here so far as can be ascertained. This disaster was generally attributed to the improper materials of which the life-boat was formed. The subscribers had contracted with the builders to make her of wainscot, with copper bolts, but after she had gone to pieces it was discovered that she had been built of elm with iron fastenings; she was a large boat, and

much more fragile in appearance than the life-boats built since. It cannot be doubted that if she had been as stoutly built as those we have now she would not have had her timbers overstrained and her joints loosened by the first sea that broke into her, nor have crumbled to pieces the first time she came to the ground. The sum of £933 was subscribed for the widows and orphans. Six of those lost belonged to Hartley, Josiah Walker, Thomas Brown, John Robinson, George Lee, James Morgan, and William Hunter; also Thomas Lilly, who was saved; the other man who was saved was a Swede, belonging to the *Beckford* of Blyth. The *Diana*, of Cambois, came into Blyth on the afternoon the life-boat was lost; as she passed Hartley she picked up the crews of two boats, with the exception of one man, John Taylor, who unfortunately fell overboard in attempting to leave his boat, and made in all twelve Cullercoats men who were drowned—their names were, William Armstrong and four sons, James Smith and three sons, John Taylor and one son, and Robert Renner.

A destructive gale occurred in the spring of 1812, when the *Margaret and Ann*, of Blyth, came on shore on the "sow and pigs." The *Fame*, of Seaton Sluice, and the *Endeavour*, of South Shields, came on shore between the Link-house and Meggy's burn. The *Cumberland*, of Shields, was lost with all her crew at Newbiggin; and the *Speedwell*, of Blyth, went on shore at Hartley Bates, and was utterly wrecked and the crew drowned. When the wreck was discovered the ship's dog was found on the beach, having swam through the surf. The *Speedwell* belonged to Mr. Sibbett, and the new brig

which was built to re-place her was named after the dog, Rover.

In the spring of 1827, during a gale, the *Prosperity*, of Sunderland, came on shore at the west side of the mouth of the harbour; her situation was not discovered till daylight, when the hull was broken up, the masts and yards entangled with the wreck and floating beside it, and the crew in the water clinging to the spars. The life-boat was manned and went to their help; the master seeing the boat within a short distance of them, began to cheer his crew by telling them the life-boat was at hand, and they would yet be saved. Every heart felt assured that the bitterness of death was past, but at that moment a wave heavier than ordinary struck the life-boat and threw the steersman overboard; continuing its course it swept over the wreck, and bore away all the crew but one! The life-boat succeeded in recovering her steersman, but when again able to proceed there was but one poor fellow left, and him they succeeded in rescuing from his perilous position.

Jan. 28, 1831, a gale commenced, which, from its violence and long continuance, makes it remembered as the greatest storm ever known on the coast: it began on the Monday, when a vessel called the *Gledow* was wrecked in the north bay. In crossing the river to render aid, a coast guard officer named Grylls was drowned. A brig, laden with iron, called the *Mars*, was caught in the gale between Blyth and Tynemouth, and, to prevent her going on shore, the master brought her up and cut away her masts. and he rode out the gale. Day after day, while the gale continued, the

mastless ship, breasting the furious waves, was the object of unceasing interest to spectators along many miles of coast. On the Wednesday morning a Sunderland brig got on Seaton Sea rocks when running for the harbour, and soon went to pieces—happily the crew were saved. The gale abated on the Friday afternoon; shortly after a large laden brig, called the *Belvidere*, had been driven on the sands at the mile hill. Many other ships were wrecked during the storm. Among these was the *Enterprize*, of Wisbeach, with all her crew. Mr. Stephens, the master, was buried in Blyth churchyard; where his relations erected a head-stone to his memory.

The second life-boat disaster took place on Thursday, Oct. 28th, 1841. On the morning of that day the *Sibsons*, George Wood, master, from Archangel, appeared off Blyth: there was at the time a heavy sea running, and no probability that any boat except the life-boat could reach the ship. It having been agreed at a meeting of the life-boat committee to launch the boat for practice, Mr. Hodgson stated that if it were found practicable to reach the vessel, to the captain of which he wished to communicate some directions, he would give a certain sum of money as remuneration for the extra labour that might be required; and judging that a favourable opportunity was offered for trying the capabilities of the boat, he volunteered to go himself. Others did the same, and at length the boat was manned. The crew consisted of Robinson Burn, commander, Henry Debord, Joseph Hodgson, William Dixon, James White, Daniel Dawson, John Hodgson, Henry Kinch, Peter Bushell, George Heron, John Heppell, and

Edward Wood. As is customary in such cases, each man had a line tied to his waist, and fastened to the boat; and thus, having provided themselves against danger as well as they could, they committed themselves to the perils of the deep. Arrived at the mouth of the harbour, they, according to nautical phraseology, "lay on their oars," watching the sea. After a short time orders were given to "pull away." No one on board seemed to anticipate any danger, though the sea was running very strong, in consequence of the wind, which for some days had blown strongly, and still continued to blow from the N.E. When the boat had nearly passed through the broken water she encountered four heavy seas in succession—she went gallantly over the three first, but when rising to the fourth, a very heavy one, the boat lost way, and instead of passing over the wave the boat ran back and forced the oars out of the hands of most of the crew. At this critical moment another tremendous wave struck the boat on the star-board bow, and completely turned her over end. When the crew found that the boat had turned over upon them, they expected that she would do what it was believed all life-boats were sure to do—right herself. But soon the terrible conviction forced itself upon them that the boat had failed them, and that if they were to be saved it must be by some other means. A sense of suffocation began to be felt. Henry Kinch, a capital swimmer, loosed himself from the boat, and came from under her. Finding that the water was comparatively smooth he encouraged the others to come from under the boat. Several succeeded, and got hold of the boat;

while others sunk after a short struggle, and were drowned. Seven managed to get upon the boat's bottom. Several people had been watching the performance of the boat, and as soon as it was seen what had occurred news of the disaster spread with the speed of the telegraph, and in an incredible short time the beach was crowded with thousands of people. The scene was the most intensely exciting the writer ever witnessed. There was the boat, bottom up, and in a sea-way, with seven men clinging to her. There was a warp on board, in coil; this had run out and gone to the bottom, and a retarded the boat in driving to the beach. This gave time for the spectators to comprehend the full amount of the peril in which the poor fellows were placed. It was seen that if they were able to keep their precarious position on the boat till they came to the surf, then would come the trying moment of their fate—the nearer she approached the shore the more imminent the danger. Now might be seen on a large scale how different characters were acted upon by a scene where human life was as if hanging [by a thread. Strong men were weeping like children, and praying loudly for the Almighty to have mercy upon the poor and apparently doomed men. Thousands would have cheerfully ventured their lives to rescue them, but vain was the help of man! At length the dreaded moment came—the boat got into the surf—for a moment was covered with the broken water—and when it was again seen there was no man clinging to her! Shortly one man was seen to gain his feet: instantly many of the bystanders rushed into the waves to lay hold of him and

bring him to the shore, which they successfully accomplished. This was Henry Kinch. As soon as he was laid hold of another was seen floating on the water further out—in a moment a rush was made to his help—soon one of the foremost discerned the grey hairs of Mr. Henry Debord floating on the surface: help was at hand, and the belief was that they were in time to save his valuable life; but though he gave unmistakeable signs of life when laid hold of, by the time he was got to the shore life appeared to be gone. After this, for some minutes, though a thousand eyes were directed to the surf, no one could be seen; and it was concluded that but one of the twelve was saved: at last another man was seen at the edge of the surf: this proved to be Mr. Joseph Hodgson. He was quickly got out, but in a state of unconsciousness; but through the prompt application of proper means was brought to life. Henry Kinch greatly distinguished himself on the occasion: it deserves to be remembered to his credit that while he had to contend with the billows for his own safety he made vigorous efforts to save several of those who unfortunately perished.

This was a most melancholy occurrence, by which several valuable lives were lost. Mr. Henry Debord's death was much lamented, being deservedly held in high respect by his townsmen. He had retired from the sea in the expectation of enjoying, in the eve of life, the fruit of many years of toil and danger. Mr. Robinson Burn was a public loss: his coolness and ability as a seaman, and the superiority of his character, fitted him to be the leader in all enterprises of peril where life or property were endangered by storm and shipwreck.

CHAPTER IX.

Harbour in early times. Quay building. Harbour Improvements and Cost. Salt Trade in early times. Six New Pans. Salt Garner burnt. Sleekburn Pans. Salters and smuggling. Coal Trade in early times. Wright and Spearman. Plessy coal brought to Blyth. Ships clearing over-sea in 1723. Ships clearing coastwise, 1733. Minor articles of export. Kelp. Corn. Iron Ships. Names of ships in 1770 and 1789.

WE have no means of ascertaining when our harbour began to be frequented by ships. Of the successive nations that obtained possession of Britain within the period of authentic history, the Gallic colonists of the time of Cæsar were in too early a stage of civilization to hold any considerable intercourse with the rest of the world; and the Romans, who succeeded them, were of a stock that had always shown itself anti-commercial in genius and policy; but as they had so long a possession of the Tyne, and the Blyth being at so short a distance from it, it must have been perfectly known to them, and most likely they used it more or less during the three hundred years they dwelt upon the Tyne. But the Saxons, although they had not been in circumstances to turn their skill in navigation to commercial purposes, had long before the conquest of our island been accustomed to roam the seas. From the fact that the adjacent places bear names of Saxon origin, we may infer the great extent to which the aboriginal inhabitants had been driven out of, and despoiled of, their lands by their Saxon invaders. Both at the time of the invasion and afterwards, when they brought over

their families to settle upon the conquered lands, they must have come by sea ; and doubtless at that period Blyth harbour would be crowded by the rude Saxon ships described by Gibbon. But the Saxons, after their settlement in Great Britain, completely neglected the sea. It was not till the reign of Alfred, towards the end of the ninth century, that the Saxons of England ever thought of building a ship, at least for war ; and it may be doubted if before that time they had any trading vessels of their own. Even for the first four reigns after the conquest the notices that have come down to us on the subject of the national commerce are still comparatively few and unimportant. In 1292 the monastery of Tyne-mouth laid claim to the wreck of the sea on the Cowpen shore of the river. Wreck floating into the harbour in an easterly storm would be driven to the Cowpen side. From this we may infer that ships were then frequenting our coast in such numbers that wrecks had become so common as to make it a subject of contention between the monks and the bishop as to which had the right to appropriate the wreck.* Hutchinson (the county historian) quotes an authority of 1346 to show that the Bishop of Durham at that time received fourpence for

* The old law or custom of England made all wrecks the property of the crown. Henry I. mitigated this so that if any human being escaped alive out of the ship it would be no wreck ; and his grandson still further extended the operation of the humane principle, by decreeing that if either man or beast should be found alive in any vessel wrecked upon the coasts of England the property should be preserved for the owners, if claimed within three months ; but the hardship remained that if neither man nor beast were saved the shipowner lost his claim.

In an account of the disbursements of the Priory of Holy Island we find the following items.—1389-90. Paid Sir Gerard Heron and Henry de Ridall for the damage and transgression committed at Holy Island, in the time of Prior Bilberfeld, upon a wreck belonging to John Fordham, late bishop. 1392. The profits of a ship wrecked at Holy Island £7 6s.

the anchorage of each ship in the water of Blyth, in Bedlingtonshire, which for that year amounted to 3s. 4d. for ten ships. In 1497 John Spittel, the bishop's bailiff, having by favour suffered John Gosten and John Raw, tenants of the Earl of Westmoreland, to occupy the royal rights of the bishop for six years, a court was held at Bedlington, before Richard Danby, to investigate this transaction; when the jurors declared on oath that the anchorage and wreckage of sea, and all other regalia happening within the lordship, solely belong to the lord bishop, as the royal right of his church, and no other. And Spearman, from an authority dated 1589, shows that the lord bishop leased out the anchorage, beaconage, wharfage, ballast quay, the wastes between high and low water, and all the wreck of the sea on that coast. The terms anchorage, beaconage, wharfage, and ballast quay, all show that ships were using the port but without indicating to what extent.

The earliest description of Blyth harbour that I have met with is contained in a publication for the use of shipmasters: the title page of the book was wanting, so that the author's name with the exact date of the publication is to me unknown, but from other evidence I conclude it to have been published before 1710. The author professes to give his account of the harbour from personal knowledge though, strangely enough, he begins by stating that Blith is at the mouth of the river Coquet, and the entrance to the place very difficult; but, he says, the fishermen are all pilots and will guide any ship in, the channel being all beacons. He then goes on to complain that all former pilot books were strangely

wrong about Blyth, which might endanger any ship if the master is not acquainted, and does not take a pilot, for they say expressly there is 6 feet water at the entrance at low tide, whereas I have rode over the entrance at low water several times, and not been up to the horse's belly. Also they say there is 16 fathoms at high water, and 6 feet at low water, which cannot be true; and yet the words 16 fathoms are twice repeated. This I note for the safety of strangers that may be bound in. The truth of the case is this: That at the quay there is sixteen feet at the top of the springs and 2 feet to $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet at low water, between the beacon and the entrance. There is a good quay within the bar for the loading of coals, but no town nor any navigation further up, except for small boats, keels, and fishing vessels. Some rocks lie east of Blith, about a mile off in the sea; they are seen above water the quarter ebb. They who sail along shore ought to be very careful of these rocks.

In 1756 we find the following description of Blyth harbour, in a large folio volume, entitled "Great Britain's Coasting Pilot," by Captain Grenville Collins, hydrographer to the king. "Blythe lieth three miles to the north of Seaton Sluice. There are two beacons on the sand hills, to the southward of the entrance into the river, which leads you in between two beacons, and being between the two first or outward beacons, then steer away close to the second beacon and have it on the larboard side; and then run up and anchor before Blyth Key, where is 16 feet water at spring tides, and 6 feet at low water; but between the beacons going in is but 2 feet at low water, and 16 feet at high water.

There are rocks (which have a beacon thereon, on the south side going in) shown at low water. There are rocks that lie to the east of Blyth, which are above water the last quarter ebb, and lie north by east, three miles from Seaton Sluice; of which rocks you must be careful when you sail along shore. The spring tides rise 16 feet and the neaps 7 feet." The reader will observe that Captain Collins in his directions for entering Blyth harbour is not very exact as to the bearings of the beacons; but he agrees with the writer of the former directions that the depth of water at spring tides was sixteen feet.

The harbour remained as nature had formed it, for many centuries, with the exception of small quays as loading places in the upper part of the river. As we have said in a former chapter, there was in 1689 a quay at the link end, but none at the south side. We have not ascertained when the first quay was erected on this side, but the coal quay between the keel and boat docks was in existence in 1723; and four years afterwards we have an account of the building of the quay from the keel dock to the flanker, known as the ballast quay.

Account of Charges of Building a Ballast Quay at South Blyth, on account of Richard Ridley and Company, viz :

	£	s.	d.
1727. Cash paid Mr. Peter Potts, for quarry leave for working stone	21	0	0
Paid John Hindmarsh, for earnest for alderman's order ..	1	0	0
Paid Ditto for building 2,510 solid yards, at 2/4 per yard	292	18	5
Paid Henry Clark for repairing stone keel	8	5	0
	<hr/>		
	£323	3	5

1728.	Paid John Hindmarsh, for building 800 solid yds. of quay	93	6	8
1729.	Paid John Hindmarsh, for building pilot's watch-house ..	2	0	0
1730.	Paid for 400 bricks for the light-house	0	4	0
1720.	Paid John Hindmarsh, for building 407 yards of quay at West Flanker	47	8	8

Attempts appear to have been made from time to time to lower the shoal in the under part of the harbour, as certain sums for work done at the shoal frequently occur. Harbour dues at this time—1s. 4d. per ship.

In 1765 there is an account for £184 8s. 11d., for work at what they term the north pier: that would be what till recently was known as the "north dyke." For several successive years there are accounts for work done at the north pier. In the spring of 1767 there occurred a very large tide, the sea at the same time running very high burst through the link at the north end of the fisher houses, and the breach soon became so large by the ebbing and flowing of the tide through it, that it became a work of great difficulty to repair it, the timber and labour expended upon it costing more than £30. The light-house was built in 1788, previous to which the harbour was lighted by two coal lamps: one was placed on the space at the south end of the east side of North-umberland street, the other on the bank opposite the low light. Except the building of Cowpen Quay in 1795, and the building of the "new dyke" by Mr. Taylor Winship more than forty years ago, nothing was done for the advantage of the harbour until the recent improvements.

On the building of the ballast quay at the north side in 1820, the Bishop of Durham brought his action against Sir Matthew White Ridley, Baronet, at the

Newcastle assizes in 1821, to recover the land between high and low water mark, on the north side of the river Blyth. The matter was compromised: the Bishop abandoning his claim, and Sir Matthew agreeing to afford to the Bishop and the public certain accommodation upon his land for mooring ships and casting ballast upon conditions to be settled by reference. Prior to 1848 Blyth belonged to the port of Newcastle. On the 6th of April, in that year, by an order of the Lords of the Treasury, the port of Shields was constituted out of the port of Newcastle. Blyth and Alnmouth were at the same time detached from Newcastle—the former being added to Shields, and the latter to Berwick.

A meeting was held in Blyth, April 26th, 1852, Mr. John Dent in the chair, when it was resolved to construct Docks. A company, with a capital of £150,000, in £20 shares, was soon afterwards formed. Another meeting on the subject was held at the Ridley Arms Inn, on the 29th January following, when the local committee gave a flattering account of the position and prospects of the scheme. A considerable part of the stock was subscribed for at the meeting. The Dock Bill received the royal assent July 3rd, 1854, and the first meeting of the shareholders was held at the George Inn, Newcastle, on Monday, July 31, 1854. On the motion of Mr. Gilbert Ward, the following gentlemen were associated with Sir M. W. Ridley as directors, viz.: John Hodgson Hinde, John Cookson, Edward Potter, and Nicholas Wright, esquires. The directors afterwards held their first meeting, when it was arranged that Mr. Abernethy, the engineer, should be communicated with, and requested

to meet the directors on an early day at Blyth, to determine on the primary steps to be taken in furtherance of the undertaking. On the 8th September, 1856, while the works were in progress, as a lighter with thirteen men on board was being moved against the tide, in the harbour, it upset, and four men were drowned.

AN ACCOUNT OF OUTLAY ON PIER AND HARBOUR WORKS
UP TO JUNE 30TH, 1862.

	£	s.	d.
Parliamentary and Preliminary Expenses	4195	19	0
Stone Pier	5908	0	9
Timber Pier	31140	19	4
Wharfing	3653	12	2
Western Breakwater	14776	4	9
Dredging	16390	10	4
Contractor removing Bishop's Quay	501	19	6
Formation of New Quay	417	18	5
Forming and Deepening Ships' Berths	286	7	1
Blyth Harbour and Port Dues	12700	0	0
Bishop's Quay purchase	144	5	7
Salaries and Miscellaneous Expenses	1678	2	3
Engineering and Surveying Expenses	5643	14	11
Printing, Stationery, Advertising, and Interest	1628	17	1
Working Plant, &c.	3040	18	4
	<u>£102,107</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>

The entire amount expended on capital account up to Dec. 31st, 1868, amounts to £116,130 8s. 2d.

The new works have not to the present provided either the kind or amount of accommodation needed to meet the requirements of the steam coal field. And the return for the capital invested has been extremely disappointing; indeed the revenue will have to be doubled before even a moderate rate of interest can be paid to the shareholders. A new dredger was procured in 1866, which has been kept employed in deepening the channel. And up to Dec. 31st, 1868, the sum thus

expended amounted to £16,390 10s. 4d. The total quantity raised in the year 1868 was 127,205 tons, at the cost of 2½d. per ton. It is expected that by the autumn of this year an increased depth of 2 feet (or 4 feet more than the depth shown by the tidal gauge of the port) will be obtained throughout the whole channel, which will, it is trusted, encourage an increase in the trade by means of more screw steamers. In the mean time the deepening of the inner part of the harbour is carried on with a view of gaining a greater depth of water for loaded vessels; for mooring which, and enabling them to be removed from the loading spouts when prevented from proceeding to sea, two dolphins are in course of being erected, in such manner and situation as will afterwards form the commencement of another section of wharfing for shipping spouts.

The first collector of customs at Blyth was Mr. Robert Jackson.* In 1749, Mr. Gilbert Umfraville, collector of customs, died at Blyth; and in January, 1759, Mr. Holmes, comptroller of customs; the latter described as a gentleman of general good character and much regretted. Mr. Richard Dunn, collector, died in 1804, and was succeeded by Mr. Wilkinson. In the Blyth Gleaner, April, 1818, it is stated, Mr. William Coppin is appointed comptroller of this port, *vice* Mr. T. Davis, resigned.

* There were officers of customs residing at Blyth long before there was a custom house. One of these, John King, came to grief through his adherence to James II. This John King was son of Henry King, minister of Mulbarton, in Norfolk, who had been a great sufferer in the troublous times of Charles I. His son obtained an appointment at Hull as landing waiter; and was afterwards sent to Blyth Nook, where he held office at the period of the Revolution of 1688. On being required to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, he refused, and for which offence he was deprived of his office.

The first intimation we have of any kind of trade being carried on in the port of Blyth, is in the article of salt, which most probably would be the first thing attempted to be manufactured in this part of the kingdom as an article of export. Beside the salt pan at the Snook, there were salt works at Cowpen before the year 1201, for in that year king John granted to the canons of Brinkburn "lands between the salt works, and the way which led from the Coup-well to the mill in Coupem." The Coup-well was situated a few ridges from the fence of the field on the north side of the road, just east of Cowpen gate. It was one of the finest springs of water in the Country, and continued to flow, and was known by the same name till Cowpen north pit was sunk, which operation having destroyed the spring, the supply disappeared. The lands indicated, are the fields on the north side of the road leading from Buck's-hill to Cowpen, and the site of the salt pans would be at Cambois point, or what is now known as the high factory, where salt continued to be made down to recent times.

The monastery of Tynemouth, at the dissolution of the greater monasteries in 1539, had £4 10s. for the farm of two salt pans, with a coalpit, leased by the Abbot to Richard Benson, and £4 10s. for the farm of two salt pans and a coal pit held by Cuthbert Robyson at the King's pleasure, which were all in Cowpen. In Dr. W. Bullien's "*Book on Simples*," published in London, 1564, he says, "in the north there is salt made at the Sheles, by Tinmouth castle; the author hereof has a pan of salt on the same water. At Blith, in Northumberland, is good salt made; and also at Sir John Delaval's pans."

These last would be at Hartley Pans. In 1628, the sheriff paid into the exchequer, £2 for the rent of a salt pan from Thomas Bates, gent., and £3 for two other salt pans in Cowpen. There were salt pans where Cowpen square now stands. On the Bedlington side of the river, we find that in 1670, Edward Milburn had salt pans at the estimated rent of £30 per annum. It is curious to find that at that period salt pans were of greater relative value than collieries. The same year Charles Reah held a colliery at the rental of £10, and in 1539, while Tyne-mouth monastery had a salt pan let at £9 a year, they had a colliery and a windmill which together only let for £3 a year. In 1598, Robert Widdrington had three salt pans in Cowpen, which after his death were charged to pay to his widow £100 yearly. At an early date, pans at Sleekburn are mentioned; but the chief seat of the salt trade on the north side of the river was at North Blyth, or as it is now improperly called, the High Pans. In 1723, there were only two salt pans at Blyth, but shortly after, in 1726, other six were erected. There were eight pans at Blyth, where the present salt works are situated; there were four at North Blyth; and two where the Folly now stands, then known as the sluice bridge pans. We have no means of ascertaining what quantity of salt was exported from the port in early times. No doubt the ten ships that used the port in 1346 would take away cargoes of salt. In 1730, the works altogether produced 1000 tons annually.

The price of salt and the duty levied thereon, will be seen by the following account:—Messrs. Moxon, Dr.,
By amount of charges on 80 tons of salt, £116 16s. 4d.,

By our bill on them for the duty of 80 tons, £456 6s. 8d.—Total, £573 3s. 0d.

I have fortunately met with a document which gives a detailed statement of the cost of the erection of the six salt pans at Blyth in 1726. It reads more like a history of the affair than a bill of costs, and brings before us so many of the inhabitants of Blyth at that date, together with their occupations, as we can nowhere else find. This has induced me to give it nearly entire.

ACCOUNT OF THE COST AND CHARGES OF BUILDING 6 NEW
SALT PANS, &c., AT SOUTH BLYTH,
ON ACCOUNT OF RICHARD RIDLEY, Esq., AND CO., viz.—

1726.		£	s.	d.
Apl. 29,	Paid William Dodds, for making trestles and centres for the pans	0 8 0
May 3,	Paid William Row, for building a new trunk for ye pans	10	16	2
	Paid Henry Clark, for repairing the stone keel	...	5 15	4
" 6,	John Atkinson, for carpenters and labourers at Cullercoats in getting the six pans removed and keeling of them	13	8	3
" 19,	Paid Edward Twizell, for ferrying over John Adon's horses when led stones for the pans	...	3 18	0
July 20,	Paid Do. for ferrying over Thomas Aisquith's horses when led stones for pans	...	4 3	0
" 26,	John Wilson's account for keeling the pans at Cullercoats	4	16	0
	Thos. Hall, keel dues for 114 keels of stones for the pans	25	13	0
Sept.,	Mrs. Harrison, for ale given to the labourers and sundry other people, for helping to take the pans out of the keels and putting them into the howds	...	5 4	0
	Do. for ale for labourers heaving chalk out of ships	1	8	2
	John Lister, for smith work about the pans	...	4 6	7
	John Atkinson, for sundry petty charges at Cullercoats	0	17	8
	John Wilson, for making doors, cases, window cases, trestles, and howds; repairing the stone carts, barrows, and putting the pans into the howds	...	0 8	2
	Henry Glegghorn, for smith work done at the pans	...	1 6	1
	James Todrig, for repairing the salt pan sump	...	3 3	6
	Thos. Wilson, as per agreement, building two salt pans	50	0	0
	John Adon, 20½ days, leading mortar to the sump and rubbish from it	...	2 1	0
	George Cansfield, as per agreement, building two pans	50	0	0
	James Todrig	...	50	0
	John Adon, 176 days, leading stones from quay to masons	17	12	0

	Edward Byers, for freight for six voyages, with pumps and old deals, &c., from Cullercoats, and bricks and tiles from Sunderland	8	5	0
	Paid the labourers for burning lime for the pans	5	0	0
1727.	Do. for throwing chalk out of sundry ships for the pans	2	18	0
Feb. 15,	Thomas Wilson, for repairing the sump	5	5	0
	Labourers for cleaning out the sump	1	0	0
	John Lister, for smith work done to stone keel	0	19	3
	Thomas Lister, for sawing wood for covering the pans.. .. .	5	3	8
	James Barnes, for 71½ days leading stones to the pans	7	3	0
	George Cansfield, leading stones for building two pans.. .. .	17	17	0
	John Adon, Do. "	17	17	0
	Thomas Aisquith, Do. "	17	17	0
April 7,	John Adon, 30½ days leading rubbish to the pans	3	1	0
	Joseph Norwood, for a poye for the stone keel	0	1	8
June,	John Atkinson, for petty charges at Cullercoats	0	7	3
	Francis Brown, for smith work repairing the six pans	45	7	2
Novr.	John Wilson, for covering the six pan houses	15	0	0
	Stephen Robson, for keeling the 6 pans from Cullercoats	7	7	0
	Robert Archer, for cleaning out the six new pans	2	11	0
	Thomas Wilson, for laying the granary floor with bricks	1	9	10
	Thomas Wilson, for beam-filling the drab holes.. .. .	1	1	8
	Henry Clark, for laying on the stone keel a deck	1	14	6
	For six salt pans from Cullercoats	456	0	0
	For an old trunk from Do.	5	0	0
	Then follow twelve other items, consisting of wood and iron, which make the account for the building of the six pans amount to	£986	7	8

From the foregoing we learn how and when salt making at Cullercoats came to a close.

Then follows a detailed account of the cost of building six new salters' houses for the six new pans. These were the houses at the foot of the ballast hills, known as Salters'-row, and that were pulled down only a few years since. The cost of their erection was £83 13s. 8d.

Then again, we have a similar account of the building of what they term a salt garner; that is the building still used for storing salt by Mr. Robert Bell. It cost, in building, £81 9s. 7d. And to complete the establishment, there is what is called a cam-engine, erected for pumping water for the six pans, at the cost of £130

1s. 2d., including the purchase of a horse for six guineas, and ten shillings for trapping. What became of the engine I have not learnt, but it certainly did not come down to the end of the century, for then the salt water was all pumped by hand. At the time when all these improvements were in progress unfortunately the old salt garner took fire, of which we have the following particulars :

Paid Mrs. Harrison, for ale given to the people that assisted in extinguishing the fire in the old garner, £3 0s. 11d.

Paid Stephen Robson and partners, for ten nights' watching the salt garner after the fire, 10s.

Paid Mrs. Harrison, for ale given to the labourers for assisting carrying the burnt salt on board Francis Golland's ship, the Concord, 11s. 6d.

Paid Mrs. Harrison, for ale given to the carpenters setting up the cupples on the old garner, 4s.

Paid for 39 thraves of thatch for the old garner, £1 19s.

Paid James Barnes, two days leading thatch with a draught, 6s.

Paid Ralph Hart, 13 days drawing the thatch, at 10d., 10s. 10d.

This was the building that about 46 years since was pulled down, and the Wapping houses were built upon its site.

The salt pans at Sleekburn were still in operation in 1728, for in that year the Plessy coal office supplied coals to the amount of £32 8s. to Mr. Nicholas Burdon's two salt pans at Sleekburn, and Nicholas Burdon in return supplies them with four thousand pantiles for £6 15s.

The four salt pans at North Blyth were for many years under the superintendence of Wm. Challoner, at the salary of fifteen pounds per annum. His name occurs as one of the churchwardens of Bedlington.

The labour in making salt was chiefly done by females; they pumped the water, wheeled the coals in barrows,

and shovelled the coals in firing the pans. Their wages were very small, which they eked out by teasing oakum and pilfering small quantities of salt, which with the duty then levied upon it made it of considerable value. In the disbursements of the salt works in 1737, there is the following entry:—"Paid Cuthbert Richardson, by order of commissioners, an account of stole salt, £11 6s."

From this entry we may suppose that thieving had gone beyond the ordinary bounds, and had led to an investigation by the commissioners, which had resulted in the above payment being ordered as compensation for loss of revenue through the dishonesty of the people engaged in the works. As might be expected from such unfeminine employment, the salters were not very lady-like in their manners and habits, and were generally looked down upon by the public. They bore the character of being sad scolds, and to "fight like a salter" was a common adage.

The salt trade appears to have declined towards the end of the last century. The pans at north Blyth and the sluice bridge ceased to be used, and were pulled down. The manufacture still went on in the town till about 1810, when a system of smuggling on a large scale was discovered, which led to a discontinuance of the trade for a considerable time. They afterwards commenced, but upon a smaller scale, and on a plan that excluded female labour.

In 1807 salt was selling at £34 10s. per ton, £30 of which was duty. This high duty gave rise to an illicit manufacture of salt. In this vicinity, Cowpen Square was the principal seat of this trade: it was made in the

iron pot used in domestic cookery : and there were many houses in the square where you might have found at any hour, by day or by night, the pot on the fire, and the salt in process of manufacture. The repeal of the salt duty entirely destroyed the domestic manufacture of salt.

The introduction of the use of Coal, both as an article of foreign trade and domestic consumption, is probably to be assigned to the reign of Richard the Second, though some have been disposed to carry it farther back. The earliest authentic document in which coal is distinctly mentioned is an order of Henry III, in 1245, for an inquisition into trespasses committed in the royal forests, in which inquiry is directed to be made respecting sea coal (*de carbone maris*) found in the forests. This expression appears to imply that coals had before this been brought to London by sea, probably from Newcastle. Sea Coal Lane (between Skinner Street and Farringdon Street) is mentioned by that name in a charter of the year 1253. Regulations are laid down for the sale of coals, in the statutes of the guild of Berwick-on-Tweed, which were established in 1284. There is extant a charter of William of Abervell, in 1291, granting liberty to the monks of Dunfermline, in Scotland, to dig coals for their own use, in his lands of Pittencrief, but prohibiting them selling any. It is probable, however, that this description of fuel was not as yet much used for domestic purposes, for the smoke or smell of a coal fire was at first thought to be highly noxious. This same year, 1306, (says Maitland, in his *History of London*) sea coals being very much used in

the suburbs of London, by brewers, dyers, and others, requiring great fires, the nobility and gentry resorting thither complained thereof to the king as a public nuisance, whereby they said the air was infected with a noisome smell and a thick cloud, to the great endangering of the health of the inhabitants: wherefore a proclamation was issued strictly forbidding the use of that fuel. By the terms of the proclamation we find that it was used for the manufacture of glass, iron, bricks, &c.; but those rulers did not foresee that the abundance of coal in England would be the source of her future wealth and power. The prejudice against coal fires, however, seems in no great length of time to have died away. In 1325 we find mention made of the exportation of coals from Newcastle to France, and, by the end of the fourteenth century, there is reason to believe that an active trade was carried on in the conveyance of Newcastle coal by sea to London and elsewhere. Now, when Blyth began to take an active share in this great staple trade of the north we have no means of ascertaining. The great mineral wealth of Bedlingtonshire appears not to have been known in 1186, when Bolden Buke was compiled, as it is not once named. Indeed the Bishop of Durham at that period used wood in his hall at Bedlington, and each of the eighty oxgang in that township had to find one cart load of wood for the use of the bishop.

The earliest return which I have seen of the export of coal from Blyth is contained in the books of the Trinity House of Newcastle, A.D. 1609, and was printed by the late Thomas John Taylor in the appendix to his

Archæology of the Coal Trade. From this it appears that the export in the first six months of that year were 24 chaldrons, and in the second six months 383 chaldrons. Of this quantity no part was exported to foreign ports. But there is no reason to conclude that this was the first time that coal had been exported from Blyth. There were coal mines belonging to the Priory of Tyne-mouth at the time of the dissolution of that monastery in 1539, for which they had a rent of three pounds a year. There are authentic copies of divers deeds in the auditor of lands revenue office respecting lands, tenements, salt works, and coal mines, at Cowpen, leased or granted off in fee to different persons by Queen Elizabeth. There are many old pit shafts about Cowpen, and also in the field between the Buffalo and the mill; and in the field between Cowpen-square and the north pit there are evidences of coal having been worked. In 1598 keels were used in the river Blyth, as by the inventory of the effects of Robert Widdrington in that year it is stated that he owned half a coal keel at Cowpen. In 1608 Henry Horseley gives by will one-fourth share of the coal mines of Bebside and Cowpen, under lease from Thomas Harbottle.

In 1610, Blyth being considered as a member of the port of Newcastle, had a duty of one shilling a chaldron laid on all coals exported from it; but a petition, representing them as places of distinct interests, being presented to the House of Commons, the duty was ordered "to be laid down and no more taken up." In 1638, however, we find Newcastle, Blyth, and Berwick, paying to the king one shilling per chaldron, custom,

and to sell them again to the city of London not exceeding 17s. the chaldron in summer, and 19s. the chaldron in winter. In 1642, during the civil war, the Marquis of Newcastle was governor of Newcastle, for the king, and stoutly defended it against the Scottish army under old General Leslie. This caused the parliament to issue an ordinance prohibiting ships from bringing coals and salt from Newcastle, Sunderland, and Blyth; but this restriction made fuel so scarce in London that coal was sold for £4 per chaldron. This caused another ordinance to be issued for free trade with the ports of Sunderland and Blyth, which made the trade in coals and salt very brisk at Blyth while Newcastle held out against the Scots.

We cannot trace the steps by which the coal trade arrived at the position in which we find it when the custom house was established, in 1723. Plessy colliery was in the hands of Charles Brandling in 1663. In 1723 it was in the possession of Richard Ridley; and as he was a man of both wealth and enterprise he would in all probability make the railway by which the coals then came to Blyth. In the list of tenants given in the advertisement of the Newsham estate in 1723 Wright and Spearman are tenants of a staith at £100 a year. In 1728 I find that the Ridleys buy of Wright and Spearman 14 wagons at £4 10s. each, and a stone keel, valued by Robert Wallace at £20: thus it is certain that they had a staith and wagons; but from whence did they bring their coals? We can only conjecture. There are still the remains of a wagon way from Davison's mill to the town. It was on this road that

John Clark made his rope-walk. Tradition says that coal had been got somewhere about the mill field, and most probably it was thence that Wright and Spearman brought coal with their fourteen wagons, to their staith at Blyth for shipment. In 1723 Plessy colliery sent to Blyth 21,786 chaldrons of coals, the leadage of which, at 18d. per wagon, cost £1,633 19s., the price to ships was 9s. per chaldron; the whole of these coals would not be exported as the salt works and the town would have to be supplied. The custom at that time, during the intervals when there were no ships to load, was for the wagons to continue to bring coals from the pits and deposit them on the quay, where they lay till wanted, and were then put into the ships with barrows, a certain number of barrows counting for a chaldron; there are constantly recurring accounts, for very many years, of sums being paid for barrowing coals. This continued until about 1788, when a great improvement was effected by building what is still known as the staith; where, when trade was slack, the coals were stored up, and when the trade became brisk the wagons were put upon the staith, and a wonderful scene of noise and bustle would take place on the prospect of a good sea-tide. The railway was constructed of a double line of beech rails, and laid upon oaken sleepers. The railway from Plessy continued to be made of wood till the road was discontinued in 1812. Originally the wagons had wooden wheels, and to prevent the wear and tear of the wheels, which were extremely expensive to maintain, they were studded with nails driven up to the head. I find the following,

which shows their cost: To 80 oak wagon wheels at 7s., £28; paid Watt and Brown for piecing 56 wheels at 2s. 4d., £6 10s. 8d.; paid freight for the *Woodcock*, Edward Byers, for three voyages bringing wheels and sleepers from Newcastle and Amble, £8 15s. Each wagon required a horse, and a man to conduct it; three journies or "gaits," as they were termed, was a day's work. There has no change taken place in modern times that is more wonderful to a person who recollects the mode in which coal was brought from Plessy 50 years since than to witness the steam horse now dragging after it fifty wagons with ease and speed.

We have an account of the over-sea trade commencing in 1723; it is certainly much larger than might have been expected at that time, and evidently suggests the fact that it must have taken some years to have grown to the extent we then find it. We copy from the Customs book as many of the ships cleared that year as will give the reader a knowledge of the size of the vessels then employed and the ports to which the coals were exported.

In 1723, 78 vessels cleared with coals for foreign ports; in 1733, 296 cleared coastwise; of these latter 115 went to London and 127 to Lynn. In 1739, 449 ships cleared coastwise and only 36 over-sea. There was a tax of 6s. upon coal exported to foreign ports, which was equally divided between the "old subsidy" and the "new duty." In 1757, in addition to the former duties, there is another impost on coal sent over-sea. The first cargo coming under the new impost is that of a foreign vessel, the *Hope*, Jovgen Petterson, for Stav-

enger, with 26 chaldrons, for which, as a foreign bottom, the duties amount to £27 4s., viz: old subsidy £15 12s.; new duty £6 10s.; new additional duty £5 4s.; fully 200 per cent. on the value of the coals. If the extra duty was imposed for the purpose of revenue, it was an utter failure, for from this time the foreign coal trade from Blyth is all but nil—and continued so till the end of the war in 1815.

In the last century coal appears to have been a favourite article with Chancellors of the Exchequer from which to extract revenue. In 1787 all former duties are merged in to one of 15s. 6d. per chaldron. In 1795 an additional duty of 4s. 6d. is put on; in 1796 another shilling is added; in 1797 another shilling is again added, making 22s. per chaldron: but still the increase did not cease. We give an example to show to what an enormous amount this tax had grown. In August, 1804, the *Lady Ridley*, William Smith master, cleared for Tonning with 62 chaldrons of coals, value £65, on which was paid £90 10s. 6d. consolidated customs duty, with 13s. new duty; and for tonnage duty on 175 tons there was paid £8 15s. con. duty and £8 15s. new duty, making in all £108 13s. 6d. on 62 chaldrons.

AN ACCOUNT OF SHIPS CLEARED AND GOODS EXPORTED
1723.] OVER-SEA AT BLYTH NOOK.

George & Nathaniel.....	Henry Bradley	Rotterdam	..81 chs.coals
Isabella	William Hoggitt	Hamburgh	..35 "
Content	Benjamin Bryan	Do.	..20 "
Rachael and Jane.....	Jacob Lee, of Blyth ...	Eastrice.....	..20 "
Happy Return	John Jackson	Rotterdam.....	..36 "
William	William Storicker.....	Amsterdam	..20 "
Berwick Merchant	John Bouges	Do.	..25 "
Durham	James Stonehouse	Hamburgh	..52 "
Elizabeth	Benjamin Langley....	Amsterdam	..15 "
Reserve	Edward Leake	Rotterdam.....	..49 "

Margaret	Thomas Wilkinson ..	Rotterdam	16	chs.coals
Tryal	William Marshall.....	Hamburgh ..	18	"
Warwick	Guy Butler.....	Amsterdam ..	48	"
Meriah	John Lewin	Hamburgh ..	12	"
Elizabeth and Jane	Thomas Anderson ..	Rotterdam	25	"
Loyal Friendship	Alexander Bonner.....	Amsterdam ..	8	"
Elizabeth and Catherine ..	Richard Hawkin	Do.	14	"
Anthony of Lynn	Nathaniel Carnaby ..	Rotterdam	12	"
Truelove	Robert Lockey	Hamburgh ..	17	"
Farmer's Adventure.....	Robert Brown	Do.	26	"
Arnold and Martin	John Jackson.....	Dort	26	"
Thomas and Sarah	C. Watson	Rotterdam	34	"
Thomas and Catherine ..	Wilkin Boyington....	Do.	30	"
Providence.....	Stephen Daveson	Do.	43	"
Newbeginnn	William Cowper	Amsterdam ..	32	"
Joseph and Mary	Joseph Jackson	Rotterdam	31	"
Richard and Esther.....	Thomas Paine	Amsterdam ..	26	"
Laurel.....	John Jackson	Do.	40	"
Hanover	John White	Bremen	23	"
Success	John Nicholson.....	Rotterdam	18	"
Friend's Adventure	Edward Hill	Hamburgh ..	15	"
Adventure	Robert Brown	Do.	28	"
Edmund and Sarah	Henry May	Skeedam	20	"
Providence.....	John Dickinson.....	Do.	25	"
Elizabeth	Nathaniel Foot	Bremen	44	"



AN ACCOUNT OF SHIPS CLEARED, AND GOODS EXPORTED 1733.] COASTWISE, FROM BLYTH-NOOK.

BONDESMEN.	
John Maltby	Industry, Scarbro', Isaac WilsonLondon..55 chs.cls.
Geo. Easterby	Ann and Mary, Wells, Robert Base ..Wells...34 "
Do.	Endeavour, Whitby, Ben. Lazenby, 35 doz. calf skins in hairLondon..89 "
Do.	Blessing, Scarbro', Chr. DickinsonLynn..62 "
Ben. Lazenby	Industry, Clay, Thomas SeamsBlackney..16 "
James Barnes	Simon and Robert, Lowestoft, James Landi- fieldLondon..48 "
Geo. Easterby	Skeedam Mercht, Scarbro', T. Covert ..Lynn..86 "
Do.	Concord, Scarbro', Zebedee WoodLynn..62 "
John Wilson	Blyth, Blyth, Jordan Sturdy.....Whitby..13 "
James Barnes	John & Robert, Whitby, R. Robson..London..85 "
Wm. Ballemey	Resignation, Wells, John Springold..London..86 "
John Springold	Prudent Mary, William Bellamy ..Lynn..44 "
Wm. Allen	Thomas & Ann, Rochester, Arthur Manclarka, 800 quarters of oatsLondon..
Geo. Easterby	Woodcock, Blyth, Edwd. Byers, jun., Whitby... 8 "
James Barnes	Laurel, Lynn, John JacksonLynn..48 "
Geo. Easterby	Nightingale, Scarbro', John Robinson..Lynn..80 "
James Barnes	Providence, Scarbro', John Stephenson, Lynn..52 "
Do.	Hopewell, Bridlington, Geo. Brown, Bridltn..43 "

James Barnes	St. Michael, Yarmouth, Hugh Debbig, Yarm...26	chs.cla.
Geo. Easterby	Sarah, Newcastle, John Brown	Lynn...38 "
Do.	Elizabeth, London, Jona. Arrowsmith, Londn...	56 "
James Barnes	Jacob & James, Blyth, Jacob Lee, jun., 30 tons	
	of salt	Lynn...12 "
Wm. Bellamy	Happy Return, Scarbro', John Maltby, Lynn...	52 "
Do.	Providence, Lynn, John Burleigh	Lynn...42 "
Hugh Debbeig	Thomas, Yarmouth, Joseph Harris,...Yarmth...	50 "
Geo. Easterby	Ann & Cecilly, London, George Steel, 300 qrs.	
	of oats.....	London...
Robert Sprat	Robert and John. Lowestoft, John Thomas, 85	
	tons of salt	London...
Geo. Easterby	Rose in June, Blyth, Ed. Byers, sen., Whitby...	8 "
Joseph Kelly	Mayflower, Blyth, James Hall.....	Hartlepool.. 8 "
Wm. Atkinson	Loyal Jane, Lynn, William Vincent....	Lynn...86 "
Joseph Kelly	Mayflower, Blyth, Charles Twizell..	Whitby.. 8 "
Wm. Storey	Mackerel, Shields, Jas. Nicholson, 250 qrs. oats,	
	30 chas. grindstns., 30 firkins butr., London.	
J. Woodhouse	Nightingale, Shields, Peter Nelson, 100 tons of	
	salt	—London.. 2 ;
Peter Nelson	Duke of Cornwall, London, 20 firkins of butter,	
	139 tons of salt	London...
Geo. Easterby	Rachael and Jane, Blyth, James Lee, London...	40 "

At this early period ships had to take part of their cargo at sea, from keels. In 1728, there is paid to Henry Clark, for carpenter work done to the four keels, £15 2s. 4d.; and further on in the same year there is paid for two new keels, cost per tradesmen's note, £183 6s. 4½d.; and also a sum paid to Joseph Dove for bringing two new keels from Newcastle. A custom at this time prevailed, of treating the shipmasters loading coals in the port; this we learn by entries like the following: Paid Mrs. Harrison, for sundry accounts for entertaining masters, from Nov. 11th, 1727, to Nov. 11th, 1728, £107 10s. 8d. Mrs. Harrison had an account of this kind year after year, for many years; in 1733 it amounts to £126 11s. 3d. Nov. 10th, 1738, paid fees and expenses in procuring a clause in the late coal act, for allowing coals to be shipped in wagons. In 1767,

allowed Capt. Robert Rockwood, to try an experiment of his loading coals, £3 18s. 6d.

Cowpen Colliery commenced under the auspices of Messrs. Morrison, Clark, Surtees, and Rowe. The first attempt to find coal was made in April, 1794, and was sent to market in November, 1795. Plessy colliery was discontinued in the spring of 1813. Netherton colliery commenced shipping on the 25th December, 1819, on which day the *Fraser*, sloop, sailed with the first cargo. A valuable seam was won at Bebside, and on the 12th of May, 1855, the first cargo of coals was shipped at Blyth, amid some rejoicings.

Want of space prevents our giving an annual statement of the exports; we, however, present one at such intervals as will sufficiently mark the progress our coal trade has made. In the first four years the amount is in chaldrons, and includes the export from Hartley; in the following years it is in tons, and is from the port of Blyth alone.

Years.	No. of Ships.	Register Tonnage.	Coastwise. CHAS.	Foreign. CHAS.
1776			32,000	nil
1796			29,273	411
1816			49,417	771
1826			51,533	1,395
			TONS.	TONS.
1856	1067	111,943	96,459	76,487
1857	1214	136,336	94,382	105,760
1858	1205	146,159	115,901	108,286
1859	1138	138,174	109,901	109,962
1860	1130	136,399	109,428	115,023
1861	1444	179,761	133,065	147,440

1861 was an exceptionally brisk year in the coal trade, no subsequent year has at all approached to it. In

1868 there were 240,542 tons of coals exported, in 1,184 ships of 172,769 register tonnage.

While coal and salt have always been the chief articles of export, other branches of trade have been prosecuted. Kelp was made on the links, between Camboise and the link-end, two hundred years ago, and continued to be manufactured there till recent times. In 1733, 16 tons of kelp are sent to Whitby; there are minor articles exported from time to time, and at one period a considerable quantity of epsom salts; at another time several tons of British stript tobacco stalks are sent to London. Agricultural produce for many years was sent in considerable quantities to London. North Blyth was the place of shipment for corn, &c., where the granaries were situated, and to which the corn was brought on pack-horses down to the middle of the last century. In 1742 the exports to London were 11,225 quarters of oats, 1,647 quarters of wheat, 4,451 firkins of butter, 94 casks of British cured cod fish, and a considerable quantity of English wrought iron, which had been manufactured at what was then called the Bedlington furnace. The corn trade dwindled down till towards the close of the century, when it ceased. On the decline of the salt and corn trades at North Blyth, an effort was made to establish a manufactory of pottery, which, after a short existence, failed. The old slitting mills at Bedlington were advertised in the *Newcastle Courant* in 1750 and 1757, to be sold, together with shops for about forty nailers. This concern came into the hands of the Malings, of Sunderland, but they were not successful in business. Messrs. Hawks and Co., of

Gateshead, afterwards extended and carried on these works till after the beginning of the present century ; they were afterwards carried on for nearly half a century by Messrs. Biddulph, Gordon, and Co. ; the works gave employment to a great number of workmen, and large quantities of manufactured iron were conveyed down the river in lighters, and shipped at Blyth.

About thirty years ago Blyth seemed in a fair way of getting a large and important manufacture permanently established. An enterprising firm, with capital at command, began the manufacture of alkali. Their first factory was erected at the low quay, the concern was under the management of Mr. Leighton, an eminent manufacturing chemist ; they afterwards built what was termed the high factory, at Camboise point, where they made the vitriol, which they used in immense quantities in producing the chemicals they sent to market. Unfortunately the concern which promised to be so great a benefit to the town, failed to remunerate the spirited proprietors, who, after losing a great amount of capital, had to abandon the enterprise. After this, Mr. Richard Wilson got a patent for making chimney-pieces, &c., out of clay, in imitation of marble ; buildings were erected in which to conduct the manufacture, but after a trial the project did not succeed.

In 1723, there is only one vessel belonging to Blyth engaged in the foreign trade, the *Rachael and Jane*, Jacob Lee master and owner ; he lived at North Blyth, and had three sons, who became masters ; his son Jacob was a pilot in 1760 ; the family have a tomb-stone in Horton church-yard. There might be other Blyth ves-

sels in the coasting trade that year, but they must have been few in number, and small in size, as the reader may see by looking over the list we have given of ships clearing coastwise in 1733. At that date Jacob Lee has a second vessel, the *Jacob and James*, of which his son Jacob is master. Then there is the *Blyth*, *Woodcock*, *Rose in June*, *Mayflower*, and the *Rachael and Jane* of 1723 replaced by a new one of the same name, of 40 chaldrons, of which James Lee is master; and 98 chaldrons is the burthen of the shipping of the port of Blyth-nook at that date. In 1733 the *Ann* is added to the list, and in 1742 there is another vessel, the *Jane*, Christopher Jubb master. In 1750 all these vessels have disappeared, and in that year only one Blyth ship, clears at the custom house, the *Olive Branch*, 42 chaldrone, William Kirkup master. In 1754 there is an *Elizabeth*, 18 chaldrons, and the next year a *Susannah*, 47 chaldrons. So slowly had shipping progressed, that up to 1761 there were only three belonging to the port. There were several Lynn vessels which took cargoes to their own port, and the rest of the carrying trade was done chiefly by ships belonging to Whitby and Scarbro'. George Marshall and Edmund Hannay each have a ship in 1761, and in the next nine years thirteen other ships are added to the list.

We give the following account of a ship's expenses of cargo of coals, &c., in 1792. It is to be borne in mind that at that time, and long afterwards, the shipowner was merchant as well; he bought the coals, and the difference between the prices obtained for his cargo and that which he gave for it was the amount of his freight.

**MESSRS. SHOTTON AND POTTS, ON ACCOUNT OF THE
MERCURY, OF BLYTH.**

For 95½ chaldrons of coals	81	8	8
Ballast and Harbour Dues	1	4	0
Clearing at the Custom House	4	15	0
Trimming	0	18	0
Pilotage	1	6	6
Loading 55 wagons from the staith	0	13	9
Foy Boats assisting ship to sea	2	0	2

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NAMES OF VESSELS BELONGING TO THE PORT OF BLYTH, 1770.

SHIPS.	OWNERS.	CHAS	MASTERS.
John and Jane	George Marshall	120	James Wood
John and Martha ..	E. Hannay	61	
Mary	Do.	109	John Hannay
Charming Sally.....		78	William Harrison
Mary		42	George Huntley
Success		52	Edward Twizell
Thomas and Ann		23	Thomas Potts
James and Mary	E. Hannay	95	Richard Wheatley
Fanny	Francis Wright	55	Francis Wright
Molly		52	Charles Twizell
Nancy		100	Thomas Twizell
Adventure		67	Richard Wright
Good Intent		19	John Watts
John		48	John Toderig
Britain, of Bedlington.		86	Edward Fairfoot

LIST OF VESSELS IN 1789.

Hope	Edmund Hannay....	116	Matthew Wilson
Chancellor	Do.	106	William Collier
Holderness	Do.	137	William Russell
John	Do.	36	William Taylor
Edward and Mary ..	Edward Watts.....	101	Robert Urwin
William and Frances	William Harrison ...	108	Henry Patton
Hesperus ..	John Clark	134	John Swinburne
Polly ..	Do.	92	William Patterson
George and Jane ...	Jane Marshall	120	Mark Marshall
Caledonia	Mk. & John Marshall	120	John Duncan
Constant Ann	John Annet	22	George Lough
John and Betsy.....	Do.	31	Thomas Wilson
Thomas and Alice....	R. and T. Hodgson ..	72	Joseph Hodgson
Mercury	Shotton and Potts ..	102	Benjamin Brown
Mayflower	John Watts	73	Thomas Taylor
James and Mary	Robert Stoker	94	Vincent Elsworth
Fanny	Edward Wright	56	Edward Wright
Fortune	Thomas Gibson	48	Thomas Gibson
Ceres ..	James Ramsay.....	92	John Sibbet
Charming Sally.....	John Storey	80	Edward Robinson
Dorothy	George Potts	32	Edward Cowell
John	R. Smith, Plessy....	22	Henry Smart
Robert and Margaret	Robert Briggs	93	Henry Taylor

BLYTH SHIPS IN 1807, OWNERS' NAMES, AND BURTHEN IN CHALDRONS.

Agenoria	50	James Black	Industry	54	Geo. Morrison
Albion	88	Ed. Robinson	James & Mary	40	George Lough
Alert	37	M. & J. Marshall	Lively	136	E. Watts
Anna	60	John Short	Minerva	48	John Morrison
Adventure	63	William Smith	Mercury	95	Milburn
Ark	67	John Clark	Marys	27	Wm Wilson
Bickford	61	Wm. Wilson	Manning	70	John Clark
Benson	40	John Gray	Margt. & Ann..	99	Heppel
Brothers	17	Ed. Marshall	Nautilus	124	J. & M. Marshall
Ceylon	52	Thos. Wilson	Nautilus	56	Colvin
Claude	47	Thomas Bury	Omnium	126	John Clark
Commerce.....	55	E. Watts	Providence	58	Bedlington
Charles	86	John Clark	Providence	51	Wm. Patterson
Ceres	40	Gilbt. Gledston	Ruby	18	E. Poad
Edmund	86	George Storey	Speedwell	38	John Sibbet
Eclipse	92	J. & M. Marshall	Swan	16	E. Watts
Eleanor	60	Jno. Swinburne	Salamander.....	44	H. Debord
Eagle	32		Surprise	44	Henry Taylor
Frieds Endeavor	32	Thos. Wilson	Thomas & Alice	72	R. Hodgson.
Good Intent ..	95	Heppel	Three Brothers	88	C. Jobsoa
Gimini	80	John Clark	Three Sisters ..	88	C. Jobson
Hesperus.....	134	John Clark	Wnnsbeck	86	John Clark
Hope	116	Milburn	William	84	John Clark
Jane.....	44	Geo. Mattison	Withiam	56	Henry Taylor
Isabella	64	Aynsley	Walker	150	Matw. Wilson
John and Betsy	38	Thos. Wilson	Westmoreland	160	Matw. Wilson
John.....	88	John Clark			

In 1817, there were 57 vessels insured in two clubs, with a capital of £60,000; in 1830, there were 79 vessels insured to the amount of £88,000; in October, 1862, there were 120 ships, 40 of which are sheathed with either copper, yellow metal, or zinc, and valued at £201,100—a wonderful advance upon the one little ship, the *Olive Branch*, of 1750. In 1869, the sailing vessels registered by Blyth owners were 172, of 44,620 tons, and of the value of £334,500, exclusive of steam vessels.

CHAPTER X.

Phoenix Friendly Society. Mechanics' Institute. John Storey. Capt. Bergen. Institutions, &c. Borough of Morpeth. Extinct Surnames. Wages. Allowance. Rates.

THERE have been several Benefit Societies instituted in the town, two that were begun at the Nag's Head, at the beginning of the present century, were of considerable promise—the one for seamen, the other for tradesmen—but both were brought to a premature end, after continuing about thirty years; but one that began at a later period has attained so high a position by its magnitude and usefulness, that it deserves special notice and commendation. The Phoenix Society was instituted in 1821; it is composed of Seamen, and it designs to provide for the members in the time of sickness and old age, when they lose their clothing through shipwreck, besides an annuity to their widows in case of death. We give a view of the society at intervals of ten years from its commencement:—

DATE.	NO. OF MEMB.	PAID TO WIDOWS.	PAID FOR SICKNESS.	PAID FOR SHIPWREC.	PAID FOR DEATHS.	SUPERANNUATED MEMBERS.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1831	104	29 0 0	37 1 0	11 18 0	2 0 6	
1841	208	84 0 0	41 14 0	20 7 7	35 12 0	
1851	379	247 19 0	224 5 0	49 2 8	68 16 0	
1861	501	413 15 0	170 6 0	110 0 0	57 0 0	333 11 2

By the above figures it will be seen that the society now numbers 500 members, and pays annually about the sum of £1,000 to the superannuated and sick members, widows, &c., and has a capital of £7,000. It confers

great credit on the seamen of Blyth, that they should have raised and sustained so noble an Institution out of wages that are far from being large. Any of our wealthy townsmen who may be seeking a worthy object on which to bestow £1,000, either by a present gift or a bequest at death, may with the fullest confidence make choice of the Phoenix Society.

It is to be regretted that no one has as yet acted upon the above suggestion, seeing that the society has arrived at a critical period in its history, when help is much needed. But it is to be hoped that by a thorough remodelling of this institution, before it be too late, means will be found by which it may be safely tided over the dangers that at present surround it, and that it may yet cause many a widow's heart to sing for joy.

In 1847 the Mechanics' Institute was established, and like many other societies of a similar kind, after the novelty of its inauguration had passed away, it struggled on in an ebb and flow style until 1857. At that time it became apparent to the committee that the chief hindrance to its success was the want of accommodation for conducting the operations of the Institute—having only one room to serve all the purposes of reading, library, &c. It was resolved to lay the position of the Institute before Sir M. W. Ridley, Bart., who generously offered to make at his own cost, such alterations and improvements in the old inn formerly known as the "Phoenix," as would fit it for the accommodation of the society. These alterations having been completed, the rooms were formally opened in March 1858, by a public Dinner, at which Sir M. W. Ridley presided; and from this

time the Institute may be said to have entered upon a new state of existence, for it has prospered year by year ever since, and now takes rank among the most healthy and useful in the county. It has a large lecture room, reading room, and library room; numbers 250 members; and the library consists of more than 2000 volumes.

Mr. John Storey was a native of Blyth, and a member of an old Northumbrian family, which for several generations were noted for their skill as bone-setters—a profession, which, together with that of brewer, Mr. Storey's father followed in Blyth for many years. There used to be in the public mind great distrust as to the competency of the regular medical practitioner in the bone-setting; department of his profession; and the services of the bone-setter were generally sought for in the case of a dislocated joint or a broken bone. Mr. Storey was one of Hutchinson's best scholars; he was afterwards taught Latin and French by the Rev. Robt. Greenwood, and continued diligently to increase his stock of general information through life. He engaged in the honourable but laborious occupation of instructor of youth, some time at Haxby Hall, Yorkshire, and afterwards for several years in Newcastle. But amid many works testifying to his unremitting assiduity and ardour in his profession, he still found leisure to expatiate in the more liberal walks of literature and science. His ingenuity was displayed in the construction of optical instruments, which we are given to understand were considered as marvels of accuracy and polish; and also in a peculiar mode of painting on glass: but it was especially as a botanist that he was pre-eminently

distinguished. We believe he could boast of one of the largest collection of British Plants; and he enjoyed the correspondence and friendship of the principal of those who pursue this branch of scientific inquiry, both of this country and the continent. As secretary, for many years from its commencement, of the "Tyneside Naturalists' Field Club," his able services (ever most cheerfully accorded) in correcting and superintending through the press the many valuable scientific papers which have emanated from that local scientific association, we are warranted in saying were not a little instrumental in securing that consideration they enjoy; and unobtrusive as were these labours, they were no less deserving of the recognition of the society, and of the scientific friends, whose works, by his care and intelligence, were so creditably introduced to the world.

Captain W. C. Bergen has attained considerable celebrity by his ingenious construction of the "Great Circle Chart," the value of which consists in the rapidity and accuracy with which the Great Circle track can be ascertained, and transferred to one of Mercator's projections, by merely noting the latitude of the Great Circle where it crosses given lines. These charts are strongly recommended by the highest Nautical authorities—G. B. Airey, Esq. F.R.A.S., Astronomer Royal, writes:—"I like them exceedingly well, and am only surprised that the principle should not have been promulgated before." A. de Morgan, Esq., F.R.A.S., writes:—"I am, with Mr. Airey, surprised that the principle should never have been started before, I certainly never thought of it, nor heard of it, though I once wrote a volume on

the Gnomonic Projection, and consulted all that came in my way." W. B. Woolhouse, Esq., F.R.A.S., writes:—"The Processes are correct in principle and simple in their application, and will enable the seaman, in directing his Great Circle course to dispense with much tedious computation." These are but a tithe of the testimonials to the great value of Captain Bergen's system, given by gentlemen equally competent with those quoted.

Blyth is no longer confined within the limits of the Nook, having spread far into the adjoining township of Cowpen; and the new portion of the town has greatly out-grown the older one. The old town still continues to be the chief seat of business, and since a better tenure for building sites has been offered, a considerable number of a better class of houses have been built; but the Cowpen side keeps advancing more rapidly, and of late the best public buildings of the town have been erected there. The town being situate in different townships, is a disadvantage, as relates to the management of local business, both have adopted the Local Government Act of 1858—the South Blyth District was formed in November, 1862, and that of Cowpen in July, 1864. It is to be hoped that a population, whose pursuits and interests are identical, and who are only separated by a line that forms the division of two parishes, will be brought to see that measures, to promote the best interests of the community, could be most efficiently conducted by a local authority, representing the entire town.

The growing importance of the town and port has been acknowledged, by the legislature conferring

the borough franchise upon the inhabitants. The following is the Boundary Commissioners' Report which led to Blyth being annexed to the borough of Morpeth:—

“The port of Blyth (under which is included the rapidly growing places called Cowpen Quay and Waterloo), is situate in the two townships of Cowpen, and Blyth with Newsham, which adjoins the south of the parish of Bedlington. The area of the township of Cowpen is 1,737 acres, and that of Blyth and Newsham is 1,226 acres. A considerable quantity of coal is shipped at the port of Blyth, which is capable of extensive improvements, so as to admit of a great increase of business; and it is probable that these improvements will, at no distant period, be carried out. The following statistics have been obtained relative to the townships of Cowpen and Blyth and Newsham:

TOWNSHIPS.	POPULATION.						
	1801.	1811.	1821.	1831.	1841.	1851.	1861.
Blyth	1,170	1,522	1,805	1,769	1,921	2,584	2,901
Cowpen	853	1,095	1,765	2,081	2,464	4,045	6,292
	2,023	2,617	3,570	3,850	4,485	6,621	9,193

“Many of the inhabitants of the populous part of the Cowpen township are freeholders; and a large number of houses are in course of erection. Buildings are also increasing to some extent in the town of Blyth proper, which is only divided from Cowpen by a small inlet called the Gote. The population of both townships

is essentially urban, and has for some time been, and now is, rapidly increasing.

“The area of the two townships is not large, compared with that of the existing borough, and the Commissioners are of opinion, that the inhabitants of the port of Blyth have such a present and prospective community of interest with the Parliamentary Borough, as to justify the addition of their district to it. There is no convenient boundary except that of the two townships, and the boundaries of both are continuous, and are well defined.

“The commissioners recommend, therefore, that the borough of Morpeth should consist of the present borough of Morpeth, and the townships of Cowpen, and Blyth and Newsham.”

The recommendation of the commissioners was approved by Parliament, and Blyth now forms a part of the borough of Morpeth. At the first registration, the number of voters for Blyth was 539, viz:—Cowpen 373, Blyth and Newsham 166.

The writer's long and intimate acquaintance with Blyth and its people has furnished him with data which shows to what a large extent the extinction of surnames has taken place in the town during the present century. It has long been matter of observation how the great landed families become extinct. Thus the names of our great county families—Umfraviller, Morley, Vescy, Bolam, Bertram, Delaval, &c.—have all passed away. But that the same process has been going on among the plebeian ranks, has not been observed to the same extent. It is certainly a curious fact that while the number of the general population is constantly on the

increase, there is an equally constant diminution of Surnames going on. Subjoined is a list of the names of 159 families, who have resided in the town within the last eighty years, none of whom have a single male representative at the present time; of these, I give more than 140 from my own personal knowledge; the others from trustworthy sources, chiefly John Robinson, and my late friend John Watts, with both of whom I have frequently discussed this subject—they themselves also being the last male representatives of their respective families. In several cases where the name is a common one, there have been two, three, four or five householders of the same name, none of whom have left a male descendant.

Adon	Christian	Giles	Ingram
Anderson	Clark	Gore	Jubb
Annett	Collier	Gleghorn	Kirsoop
Arkle	Cowell	Gray	Laing
Atkinson	Crowe	Green	Lamb
Bambro	Crozier	Greenwood	Laws
Barron	Crummy	Hart	Lee
Barnes	Davis	Hall	Lilburn
Pates	Davison	Hannay	Lockhart
Blacket	Davey	Handiside	Marshal
Bower	Debord	Harrison	Maffin
Brown	Dixon	Hepple	Maffin
Briggs	Dobinson	Heckles	Metcalf
Bulmer	Dove	Henderson	Middleton
Burn	Dunn	Heron	Moore
Bullock	Dummond	Hills	Morrison
Byers	Easterby	Hindmarsh	Moss
Bruce	Elder	Hodgson	Murray
Callander	Elsworth	Holdridge	Nazeby
Caithness	Elliott	Hopper	Nesbit
Cansfield	Fairbairn	Hudson	Newton
Carse	Falcus	Huggins	Northover
Carr	Fairfoot	Hunt	Ogle
Cauther	Fenkle	Hunter	Park
Chapman	Forster	Huntley	Paton
Cockerill	Ferguson	Humble	Pattison
Cooley	Forsyth	Hutchinson	Potts
Corby	Gibson	Hume	Polwart

Philips	Sadler	Stoker	Twizel
Pringle	Sardy	Suthern	Urwin
Pearson	Scroggs	Swinburn	Watts
Ramsay	Shanks	Swan	Watson
Reay	Short	Stewart	Wake
Reid	Shotton	Taylor	Weatherhead
Reavely	Sheraton	Temple	White
Rochester	Shepherd	Thirlbeck	Wigham
Rogers	Sibbet	Thoborn	Wilson
Robinson	Smith	Thompson	Wilkinson
Richardson	Steel	Todrig	Wood
Ross	Stenson	Turner	

The following dates will show the successive stages by which the Railway facilities of the town have arrived at their present position:—*May 3rd*, 1847, the Railway from Blyth to Percy Main was opened. *August 2nd*, 1852, an Act to incorporate the Blyth and Tyne Railway Company came into operation; having until this time been in private hands. *June 15th*, 1853, after a protracted struggle before a Committee of the House of Commons, the Blyth and Tyne Railway Bill (branches to Morpeth and Tynemouth) was approved of; the rival scheme, entitled "The Morpeth and Tynemouth Railway and Dock Bill," being rejected. The successful scheme received the royal assent on the *4th of August*. *May 25th*, 1857, the Morpeth branch was completed. *May 27th*, 1861, trains began to run from Blyth and Tynemouth. *July*, 1862, the Wansbeck Valley Line opened to Scots Gap. *June 27th*, 1864, trains began to run from Blyth to Newcastle. *May 1st*, 1867, the new station at Blyth was opened.

It is interesting to trace the steps by which the great improvement of the position of the working classes has been effected during the last two hundred years. In the time of the second Charles mechanics received only

six or seven shillings a week ; yet, in 1680, the honourable member for Barnstaple complained in Parliament of the exorbitant wages paid to our artisans. "The English mechanic," said he, "instead of working like the Hindoo for a piece of copper, exacts not less than a shilling a day." On the other hand, the workmen then, as at present, complained of their low wages. Ballads were sung in the streets of Norwich and Leeds, deploring the sad condition of the woollen weavers, who earned only 6d. per day. Even they, however, expected no more than the return of the good old times of the Commonwealth, when they earned a shilling a day.

I give a few extracts to show the wages given in Blyth at the beginning of the last century :

1725. Wm. Douglass is paid 18/4, for 11 days mason work, at 1/8 per day.

Paid 8/- to James Nicholson, for 12 days labouring work at -/8 per day.

Robert Corby is paid -/9 for making two keel sails and mending an old one.

John Adon is paid £1 16/-, for leading timber, &c., with his own horse and cart, 18 days at 2/- per day.

1733. Thomas Robinson receives £3 8/-, for leading stones off the rocks with two horses, 17 days at 4/- per day.

1736. John and Francis Cuthbertson are paid for 21 days carpenter work, at 1/4 per day.

1767. Robert Stoker is paid for serving the masons, 48 days, at -/10 per day.

John Mills is paid for 15½ days mason work, at 1/8 per day. Masons' wages the same as in 1725.

1770. Paid Isbel Scott, for a quarter of a year cleaning the office, 2/6.

1762. Paid Rev. Mr. Wood's salary, for one year's appointment to the chapel at Blyth, £31 10/-.

1763. Paid Rev. J. Thompson half-year's salary, for doing duty at chapel, £20.

1763. Paid Rev. Mr. Hall, on account of Francis Barrow's farm, 6/8.

This shows that the stipend of the Incumbent of Earsdon was raised at that period by a kind of customary

rate on each farm ; of these there were 66 in the parish, which, at 6s. 8d. each, amounted to £22 ; of course there would be the surplice fees besides. The tithes of the entire parish being in the hands of laymen.

From the wages book of Debord and Co., kindly placed at my disposal, I find that in 1798, when building their first ship at the Link-end, the wages of carpenters were only 2s. per day ; but in October of that year the wages were raised to 2s. 6d. In 1806, carpenters' wages were 4s. per day ; and before the end of the great war wages had risen to 6s. per day. Masons, who had been working for 1s. 8d. in 1767, had now 3s. 6d. Joiners had something less. I have not been able to find what Seamen's wages were in the last century, except that during the American war they were £3 10s. for a coal voyage ; but during the former part of this century they ranged from £10 to £8. At the close of the great Seamen's Strike, in 1815, the wages were £5 per voyage. At Plessy, 100 years ago, shifters had 1s. 3d. per shift., and it required a hewer to be a first-rate workman to earn £1 in a fortnight.

While workmen's wages were small, drink was very plentifully given them on all kinds of occasion. From 1723, Mrs Harrison has an account year after year for entertaining shipmasters, which varies from £90 to £120, which would be about 10s. for each voyage the ship loaded at Blyth.

1725. Drink at binding workmen, £2 10/-

Drink to Custom House Officers, for measuring wagons and barrows, £3 3/-

Ale given to labourers when they took stones out of the channel, £2 -/11
Smiths' drinks, £3 13/6.

Ale given to the labourers at various times, for throwing chalk in the fore part of the key, 12/8.

Smiths' drinks, for beating and repairing the pans, from May 1st, 1739, to April 3rd, 1740, £20 13/-

About 1760 Mrs. Harrison's name disappears, and John Watts dispenses the drink allowed by the Plessy office. We quote two or three items :—

1762. Paid John Watts, for allowance for several people repairing the quays, £7 6/1.

For entertaining Mr. Sunderland and the Custom House Officers when measuring the wagons and barrows, £5 5/-

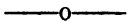
Treat to Sailors, by M. W. Ridley, Esq., £1 2/-

Account for allowance to labourers for shovelling snow off wagon-way, £3 14/2.

Accounts for allowance are constantly recurring to the end of the century. Many employers of labour at that time considered that they could get a greater amount of work done for a pint of ale than by twice its cost in money.



BEDLINGTON.



CHAPTER XI.

Bedlington. Origin of Name. St. Cuthbert. Egfred's Gift of Lands and Privileges to St. Cuthbert. Cuthcard buys Bedlington with Cuthbert's Money. St. Cuthbert's bones rest at Bedlington. Roger de Conyers. Bishop Beck. Bolden Bukes. Account of the State of Bedlington. Villanage. Copyholds. King John at Bedlington. Robert the Palmer. Adam of Cambois. Wm. de Denum. The People pull down the Parsonage.

BEDLINGTONSHIRE has the Wansbeck for its northern boundary, the sea for its eastern, the beautiful banks of the river Blyth for its southern, and the parishes of Stannington and Morpeth for its western. Its extent is about thirty square miles, and embraces the townships of Bedlington, Netherton, Choppington, West Sleekburn, East Sleekburn, and Cambois. Beds of coal and freestone extend over the whole parish.

The name of Bedlington is of Saxon origin, as are the names of most of the places in this and the adjoining parishes. The names of families enter largely into the composition of local names. They may be easily distinguished by the particle *ing* before *ham*, *ton*, *hall*, &c. Professor Kemble has furnished us with a valuable list of family names in his *Saxons of England*, in which it appears that there was a tribe of Saxons called Bædlingas, and Bedlington would mean the town where the Bædlingas lived.

The history of Bedlington commences when it became part of the patrimony of St. Cuthbert. Cuthbert, the great saint of Northumberland, from whose exemplary and wonderful life the church derived such great honours and immense riches, was born of obscure parents: when young he entered the abbey of Melrose, and during fourteen years' residence in it secured the esteem and veneration of that religious brotherhood. When Eata removed from Melrose to Landisfarne, Cuthbert accompanied him and was made prior. For twelve years he governed the priory, where he lived an exemplary life for piety and self-denial. Even at this early period seclusion had begun to be considered meritorious, and mankind were forming the opinion that the surest way to gain the victory was to shun the contest. Landisfarne, although enjoying only a precarious intercourse with the main-land, was considered by Cuthbert as not adapted to promote his eternal interests. He therefore retired to Farne, and, having constructed a lowly oratory, rigidly devoted himself to prayer and humiliation. There he continued for nine years, practising every austerity which misguided zeal could impose. He has the credit of having, during the nine years he spent here, performed miracles without number, and upon the most trifling occasions. At the end of these nine years of mortification he was reluctantly compelled to assume the management of the see of Landisfarne, where he performed his miracles with greater facility and frequency. After having resided at Landisfarne for the short period of two years, he again returned to his secluded oratory at Farne; and after the short space of

two months fell a victim to his own austerities ; he died in the year 688. Egfred, king of Northumberland, so highly esteemed Cuthbert for his piety and power of working miracles that he made him a grant of all the lands between the Tyne and Wear, to hold in as full and ample a manner as the king himself held the same, and these privileges were to attach to all lands bought with his money.

The privileges conferred upon the bishopric or county palatinate of Durham consisted of all manner of royal jurisdiction, both civil and military, by land and by sea. For the exercise thereof the bishops had proper courts of all kinds held in their name and by their authority. Thus by themselves and their officers they did justice to all persons, in all cases, without the interference of the king or any of his officers ordinarily in anything. The king's writ did not run in this county, but was directed to the bishop. Bedlington constituted a detached part of the county of Durham, from the episcopate of Cuthcard ; he was the last of the bishops of Landisfarne, and the first of those of Chester-le-Street. He made large additions to the revenues of the see, to which he succeeded in 900, and presided over fifteen years. Simeon, of Durham, tells us that amongst other valuable acquisitions he purchased the villa of Bedlington, with its appendances, Nedderton, Grubbo, Twizle, Cubbington, Slikeburn, and Camboise. The sites of Grubbo and Twizle are now unknown. At the conquest the northern counties very reluctantly submitted ; to the rule of William, and in 1072, on the return of the king from an expedition into Scotland, he caused Walcher, the

son of a nobleman in Lorraine, and who had been invited into England, to be elected bishop of Durham, and soon after his elevation to the episcopacy he received from the king the earldom of Northumberland. This bishop is generally allowed to have been the first who exercised the palatine powers in the full sense of the word, though it is certain that various privileges had been annexed to the see from the time of Alfred. The motives, says Surtees, which at this crisis might lead to the delegation of so extensive a privilege are sufficiently obvious. The vicinity of Scotland, then an active and vigilant enemy, and not less the insecure state of the northern province, always restless under the severity of the Norman yoke, demanded that at such a distance from the seat of government a power should exist capable of acting on emergency with promptitude and vigour; and the motives are no less apparent which would incline the monarch to select for this important trust an enlightened ecclesiastic appointed by and attached to the crown, in preference to a hereditary noble. Owning henceforth no earthly superior, the prelates of Durham continued for four centuries to exercise every right attached to a distinct and independent sovereignty.

In 1274, the bishop of Durham was presented for taking wreck of the sea, and using other liberties here, upon unknown warranty. But Edward I, by his charter in 1293, acknowledged this district to be parcel of the liberty of the church of St. Cuthbert of Durham, within the precincts of the county of Northumberland; and in 1295 the bishop's right to try causes arising

here, in his own chancery, under his writs, and by his own justices, was acknowledged at the assizes at Newcastle; also his right of appointing one coroner for Bedlington. It continued a royal franchise under the bishops of Durham, and had its own courts and officers, till by the statute 27th Henry VIII, cap. 24, it was abridged of them, and in civil matters merged in the county of Durham. It continued to be a part of the county of Durham till October 20th, 1844, when an act passed in the last session of parliament came into operation, entitled "The Detached Part of Counties Act," by which Islandshire, Norhamshire, and Bedlingtonshire were detached from the county of Durham, and attached to the county in which they were locally situated.

Bedlington afforded a temporary resting place to the body of St. Cuthbert, 1069. At the Conquest, the men of Northumberland (of which, be it remembered, the patrimony of St. Cuthbert at that time formed a part), had for the first three years of his reign set the Conqueror at defiance, but in the year 1069, William gave full powers to Robert Cumin and his Earl to proceed forthwith into the north, and reduce it to obedience. Cumin reached Durham, and on the very night of his arrival was burnt alive. Another general was charged with the duty, but scarcely had he reached Northalerton, when, by the interference of St. Cuthbert, a thick mist overshadowed the north, and further progress was impossible. At last the king himself undertook the expedition, and arrived at York on his journey, vowing to destroy the land by fire and sword. The news was

no sooner told in Durham, than the bishop, apparently no longer relying upon his saint, convened a chapter of the monks; and the result of the deliberations was the removal of the body of St. Cuthbert to Landisfarne. Their flight took place in the middle of December, the first day's journey ending at Jarrow; the next night they arrived at Bedlington; another night brought them to Tughall; and it was only on the fourth evening that they appeared on the strand opposite to the Island. Here (as it happened to be full tide) by a particular interposition, the sea retired, and left a dry passage for the poor wanderers; and, as soon as they had passed, the sea returned to its bed.

Roger de Conyers of Bishopton, and hereditary constable of the castle of Durham, as a reward for services rendered to the see of Durham, held Bedlington and Bedlingtonshire by the gift of bishop Fambard (1126), rendering the service of two knights' fees. This tenure did not descend, Knights' service was the most universal and honourable kind of tenure. The land required to form this tenure was called a knight's fee, and was of varied extent. In the 3rd year of Edward I., it was estimated at 12 caracutes, and valued at £20 yearly, The service rendered was, that the holder of the fee should attend his lord to the wars forty days if required. In those times the bishops not only sent their tenants to the wars, but went with them. When king Edward invaded Scotland, bishop Beck accompanied him in all the pomp and splendour of a palatine prince. 26 standard bearers of his own household, and 140 knights, formed his train, and 1000 foot, and 500 horse, marched

in the van of the army, under the consecrated banner of St. Cuthbert, which was borne by Henry of Horncaestre, a monk of the house of Durham. The bishop was present at several engagements, in one of which he is said to have been wounded; and at the decisive victory of Falkirk, he led the second line of the English army, with 39 banners. No doubt he would claim the services of his vassals in Bedlington to attend him on this occasion. But the bishop had, it seems, required more than the accustomed military services from the tenants of St. Cuthbert, who pleaded their privilege of *haliwarfolc* (holy work people), not to march beyond the bishopric, and they petitioned parliament on the subject.

In the Boldon Buke (the name given to the great rental of bishop Pudsey) the services required on all the demesne lands and possessions of the bishopric, are made in the form and manner of Domesday Book. This curious record is in small folio, consisting of 24 pages, written in a bad hand, and is kept in the office of the bishop's auditor at Durham. The Surtees Society printed it with a translation, a few years ago. The following was the state of Bedlingtonshire at the period of this survey, or about 1183:—

"In Bedlington are four score ox-gang each of sixteen acres; they pay four shillings farm rent, and one cart load of wood, and make stacks, and with the help of the other towns in Bedlingtonshire, they cart brushwood, and the stones for the mills; and in like manner they make the mill dam; and in like manner they inclose the court, and roof the hall, and get ready the fishery, and make cart loads as far as Newcastle, and as far as Fenwick, but not beyond. Robert de Hugate holds in the same town 12 acres, which were part of the waste, and renders 40d.; and 11 acres from another part, and for them he renders 44d. Guy holds one toft and one croft, and renders 12d. Seven cotters render 8s. Peter, of East Sleekburn, holds at the same place 6 acres. Each ox-gang renders one hen.

West Sleekburn renders six marcs and a half of farm rent, and carries

the bishop's writs as far as the Tweed, and goes on messages, and follows the pleas, and the villans make the mill dam, with one man for each house, and they make cart loads as far as Newcastle and Fenwick, on the lord bishop's journeys; and enclose the court, and roof the hall, and prepare the fishery, as the men of Bedlington. Turkill, who was the bishop's man, renders 12 hens, for his acquittance towards the bishop. Edwin renders 12 hens. Patrick renders one pound of pepper. Netherton renders five marcs of farm rent, and makes cart loads and other services as West Sleekburn. Robert, son of Gilpatrick, renders 24 hens. Arnold, son of Uctred, 12 hens. William Newcum, 6 hens. Ralph, son of William, 12d. Choppington renders four marcs of farm rent, and makes cart loads and other services as West Sleekburn. Cambois renders four marcs, two shillings and eight pence, and makes cart loads and other services as West Sleekburn. Edmund and Robert, brothers, render 12 hens. East Sleekburn renders four marcs, four and eightpence, of farm rent, and 40 hens; and makes cart loads and other services as West Sleekburn. A certain cotter renders 12d. The mills of Bedlingtonshire render 24 marcs."

The house of each villan, cottar, or farmer, was situated in a toft, with one or more crofts adjoining, the houses being in this way separated from each other. Many of our villages still show the old form, each cottage standing apart in its garden, and backed by a small close or croft. In Bedlington there was the demesne house or hall of the bishop, and the dwellings of one or more free tenants, perhaps not much superior in convenience and accommodation to the cottage of the villan. Attached to the village, with its enclosed parcels of ground, was the common field where each tenant held his own portion of acres of arable land, under the name of ox-gangs; at a greater distance was the pasture where the cattle fed in common. Every village had its herd for looking after the stock of whatever kind; its pounder for looking after stray cattle; and its smith or carpenter. All the people were the lord's servants, and in return for the work they rendered him, they had each their little holding, which provided for the daily wants of the family. They were termed "villans," and under

this general designation was included cot-men, bond-servants, and farmers. After the Conquest there were three classes of slaves: 1st, Villans in gross, who were the personal property of their lord, and performed the lowest household duties, They were very numerous, and not being particularly allotted to the soil, were frequently sold, and even exported to foreign countries. 2nd, The villans regardant, or predial slaves, who were attached to the soil, and specially engaged in agriculture; they were in a better condition than the villans in gross, and were allowed many indulgences. The villan could not leave his lord's land, he was a servant for life. If he left his lord he could be recovered as a stray, unless he had lived meanwhile for a year and a day in a privileged town or borough. The villan could not give his daughter in marriage without his lord's leave, and in many cases had to pay a certain sum for the liberty. If a freeman married a female villan, *neife*, as she was called, their children were free; but if a freewoman married a villan, their children were villans. A 3rd class of villans, differing from the last more in name than condition, were termed cottars. These had been instructed in some handicraft or trade, such as a carpenter or a smith, which they practised for their master, still residing on the estate, and subject to their lords in the same manner as predial slaves. As society advanced the state of slavery became less adapted to the interests of proprietors, and frequent manumissions took place; by this means the existence of villanage became less and less general, and at length totally disappeared. The villan in course of time became the copyholder of modern

days. Being allowed to hold land himself and his children, for many years, the common law gave him the title to hold his land, on rendering the accustomed services, or on payment of the money for which the services had been commuted. This title they possessed by custom, as shown in the lord's court. In this way was tenure by copyhold created in Bedlington.

The services required of the bishop's tenants varied much in different parts of the bishopric. In Bedlington they do not appear to have been so oppressive as in some places; one of the services required discloses the existence of a bishop's hall and court in the village; the hall being the occasional residence of the bishop. Within a period of thirty years, king John visited Bedlington on four separate occasions—so there must have been a tolerable house in which to accomodate him. Tradition is silent as to what part of the village the hall and court stood in, but we think with the help of existing facts we may discover their site. In the times to which we are referring, the land attached to the hall was called the *demesne*, being that portion of the lands of a manor which the lord of the manor reserved for his immediate use and occupation. There is still a portion of land in the village known as the *demesne*. In the time of Charles I, the *demesne* house and garth (or field) was held by Henry Milburne, for 8s. yearly. The *demesne* is only separated from the churchyard by a road and is church land. With these facts before us, we feel no hesitation in concluding that the ancient hall and court of Bedlington would stand somewhere about the site now occupied by the church

row. The tenants of West Sleekburn had to carry the bishops writs as far as the Tweed, to go on messages, and follow the pleas, all of which services have reference to the courts of law held in Bedlington.

The mills rendered 24 marcs; these were, Bedlington mill situated where the Iron Works are at present, and and Sheepwash, or, as it was sometimes called, Cleaswell mill; whether Humford mill was then in existence, I have not ascertained. In feudal times mills were valuable property, on account of the tenants within the manors in which they were situated, being compelled to grind a certain quantity of corn at them, at least all that was consumed within the manor, and consequently to pay a heavy mulcture. This service was called in latin, *secta multairæ*, and in English, suit of mill. The miller retained a certain portion of the meal which he ground for the tenants, varying from the twelfth to an eighteenth. Patrick, of West Sleekburn, rendered a pound of pepper, an unmistakeable proof that he was engaged in trade. Hodgson says of Cambois, that it is often written Camb-house, and might have its name from having a *cambium*, or house of trade, barter, or exchange; Patrick, no doubt, was a merchant of those times.

King John, we have said, visited Bedlington several times. We proceed to give the best account we could procure of the dates and occasions of those visits. In the beginning of 1209, the relations between the kingdoms of England and Scotland seem to have been far from amicable; at length King John, in the month of April in that year, summoned William, king of Scotland,

to meet him in Newcastle. An interview took place at Bedlington between the two monarchs, whence they proceeded together to Norham, at which place the negotiations were conducted. They extended from the 23rd to the 26th of the month, but were attended by no satisfactory result. John appears to have called at Bedlington again on his way southward. He again visited Bedlington on the 25th and 26th of January, 1213, during his progress to the north. In the beginning of the year 1216 king John marched against his rebellious barons in the north; many of whom had offended him by doing homage to the king of Scotland, at Felton; the barons, to impede the king's progress, set fire to their villages and corn; and the king himself destroyed with fire and sword the towns and villages that lay in his way. Among other places he burnt Morpeth, Mitford, Alnwick, and Wark.

During this expedition he was again two days at Bedlington, the 9th and 10th of January; this was his last visit; he died in the succeeding October at Newark. When the pope, during his quarrel with King John, placed the kingdom of England under an interdict, the then bishop of Durham, Philip of Pictavia, supported the king against the pope; for which he was excommunicated, and, dying under the sentence, was buried in unconsecrated ground, and without ceremony. This occurred about the time of the king's first visit to Bedlington. There was no bishop appointed for nine years, during which time the king would receive the revenue of the see, which will perhaps account for his so frequent visits to Bedlington.

Appended to the account of Bedlingtonshire, in the copy of Bolden Buke, and which is bound up with Hatfield's Survey, are the following memoranda, which are valuable as shewing the gradual changes which took place in the early tenure of this district:—

“Be it known that the Lord Bishop Walter, of Durham, 1249-1260, granted to all the freemen and their tenants of Netherton, Great Sleekburn, and Cambois, who hold the same villas as twelve caracutes of land, that they and their heirs shall be free from the carriage of the victuals of the bishop, to wit, from Bedlington to Fenwick, and from Bedlington to Gateshead; that they should be free from the service of covering the bishop's hall at Bedlington; from making and repairing the mill dam; and from carrying mill stones; and also from merchet and aid, except when all the freemen of the bishopric render an aid.” He exempted them also from carrying writs, and making and repairing the fish pond. For relief of this amercement, they shall give to the bishop yearly for every caracute half a marc. The said bishop also allows the said villas to grind their corn at the 16th dish; to be free from the suit of mulcture; for this concession they shall give half a marc per annum for each carracute.—Sum of this relief in money twelve marcs. The same bishop granted to Robert the Palmer, Edmund son of Edmund, John son of Patrick, Lawrence son of Edard, Walter son of William, Robert son of Henry, Thomas son of Edmund, and Henry son of Peter who hold little Sleekburn, for three caracutes of land, freedom from all the above services, paying for the release half-a-marc for each caracute. They shall

grind, &c. as above. The fishery at Cambois is affirmed to Adam Cambois, and his heirs for 3s. yearly, free and quit. Walter, lord bishop of Durham, freed John son of Thomas of Bedlington, for ever from his servitude. At this period surnames had not come into use, but the above shows the first step towards them. A large portion of surnames are formed upon what we term Christian names; as in the above, Edmund son of Edmund afterwards became Edmundson. Robert the Palmer has his name from the common form, which enthusiastic devotion assumed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, that of going on a pilgrimage to some spot supposed to be of peculiar sanctity, either within the kingdom or abroad. A palmer was a pilgrim who carried in his hand a staff of palm-tree; or one who returned from the Holy Land bearing branches of a palm. A pilgrim, or crusader, he was distinguished from the other pilgrims by being a constant traveller to holy places, and living on alms; he travelled under a vow of poverty. In the eyes of his rude neighbours Robert would be a remarkable personage, according to the notions of the times; his vocation of a palmer, the extraordinary scenes he had witnessed, and the holy places he had visited, would invest him with an interest and sanctity in their estimation, that would place him in the first rank among the followers of Christ.

A transaction in 1313, that affected Bedlington gives us a lively representation of the unsettled and unhappy condition of the northern counties, consequent upon the failure of the ambitious attempt of our two first Edwards to subdue and annex the kingdom of Scotland to the

English crown. Robert Bruce having liberated his country from the English yoke, made an irruption into Durham, and suffered soldiers to wreak their vengeance on that unfortunate district, by a week of unrestrained plunder and merciless devastation. Edward attempted to negotiate a truce, but instead of listening to his overtures, Bruce again invaded England, and burnt the towns of Hexham and Corbridge, and part of the city of Durham; and although he was repulsed in an assault on Carlisle, only consented to return across the border upon the four northern counties purchasing a truce from him by a payment of two thousand pounds each. The prior of Durham's estate or interest in the church of Bedlington contributed £4 towards raising this sum wherewith to purchase the peace of Robert Bruce. The collector was Robert de Willybyr, vicar of Woodhorn. At that period the inhabitants of Northumberland and Durham were not only suffering between the fire and sword of their northern neighbours, and the negligence and tyranny of their own king, but were also enduring all the horrors of pestilence and famine. While affairs were in this desparate condition, Sir Gilbert de Middleton, with other gentlemen plunderers, among whom was Adam, son of Richard de Camhouse, hoisted among their suffering neighbours the standard of rebellion. Middleton certainly threw the country and king into a great panic. He proclaimed himself Duke of Northumberland, and spread his forces far into Yorkshire; and while in the height of his assumed power he seized, in the southern part of the county of Durham, two cardinals, going on a peace-making errand into Scotland,

and in their suite the new Bishop of Durham. The conspirators hurried the bishop away from the scene of his capture to the castle at Mitford. Heavy subsidies were put upon the bishopric for the ransom of the prelate, and the price of peace from the rebel army; and Sir Gilbert, October 12th, 1317, gave a receipt dated at Mitford, for 200 marks in silver, paid to him by Wm. de Denum. The king, in a letter to the pope, dated October 28th, says the bishop was detained in prison till a great and almost intolerable sum of money was paid for his ransom. Adam de Cambois, for the part he took in this affair, forfeited his estate at Cambois, which consisted of four tofts and eighty acres of land. 1326, Edward II. granted Adam's tofts and acres to the above William de Denum. This William de Denum was temporal chancellor to Bishop Kellou, and had a grant from Bishop Beaumont of one-sixth part of his manor, and of 30 acres of land in the township of Choppington. William lived at Cambois. Hutchinson quotes an authority to show that he held a third part of Cambois by fealty, and 30s. rent at the exchequer, during suit at the three courts at Bedlington, and grinding such corn as grew on these lands, and he expended in his household at the bishop's mill at Bedlington, at a sixteenth mulcture. He was a lawyer of considerable eminence, and rose to the rank of baron of the exchequer; he was also chief justice of Berwick, and showed good taste in choosing this sea-side spot as his occasional residence. His widow Isabella de Denum, in 1359 gave 24 marks to the crown for the manors of Cambois and Sleekburn West; and about the year 1367, according to an inquest

after her death, finding that she was dying, ordered herself to be conveyed from her manor house here to the chapel of the manor, with the fraudulent intention of enfeoffing Sir John Stryvelyn and his heirs in these premises, as well as in the lands in West Sleekburn and Bedlington.

In 1379, an occurrence took place, which shows that the state of society at Bedlington was at that period in an extremely disorganised condition. The populace pulled down the rectory house (the manor of the monks) and had plundered and carried away the tythe corn, &c., stored up by the priest; had felled and carried away certain trees, and washed their clothes in the fish-pond, to the detriment of the fish. The only punishment inflicted on the evil-doers was, that the official of bishop Hatfield commanded the parish priest of Bedlington to excommunicate divers persons unknown, who had committed the outrage. The pulling down of a house, the carrying away corn, and felling and carrying away trees, give us the idea of a multitude being engaged in the outrage, and that operations of such magnitude must have had many onlookers; and the fact that the priest had to excommunicate divers persons unknown, shows that the witnesses of the outrage were either overawed by the numbers of the depredators, or else sympathised with them. The above occurrence shows how slight at that time was the influence of the Romish priesthood upon the bulk of the people. But the social condition of the people of England then, indicates the cause of this outbreak. The "Commons of England," as the peasantry called themselves, were in

the throes of transition from serfdom to freedom. Their condition at that period was sufficiently wretched and galling. A considerable portion of them were still serfs, or villans, bound to the soil, and sold or transmitted with the estates of the nobles and other land proprietors. The existing discontents and sufferings of this class had been intensified by the parliament, in an evil hour, passing a capitation tax, 1378. Every male and female of fifteen years of age was to pay three groats; the levying of this awkward tax might have passed over with nothing more serious than a few riots between the taxgatherers and the people, but somehow the discontented were goaded into open insurrection. They wanted nothing but a leader, and this they soon found in a "riotous priest" who took the name of Jack Straw. In a few days the peasantry of five or six counties were up in arms. In Kent, an act of brutality on the part of a taxgatherer, on the daughter of Walter the Tyler, led the commons of Kent to rise as one man, and with Wat at their head marched to London, where they very nearly effected the destruction of the government. While these events were passing in London and its neighbourhood the servile war had spread over a great part of England. After the death of Wat Tyler the insurrection was put down with terrible severity. Besides numbers that were slain during the conflict, more than 1,500 of the peasantry were executed afterwards.

CHAPTER XII.

Gentlemen Thieves. Dutchmen at Bedlington. Bishop's Tenants.

WE have now to notice another outrage, but committed by men of a very different class. On the 24th July, 1449, at an inquisition at Bedlington, the jurors say, That Robert Ogle, jun., of Ogle, knight, Thomas Ogle his brother, Robert Ogle, of Ogle, esquire, John Trewick, of Trewick, gentleman, John Hepple, of Ogle, yeoman, with other malefactors unknown, on the 20th of June, 1448, armed with lances, swords, bows and arrows, carried off from West Sleekburn and Cambois, 30 sheep belonging to John Franshh; 14 oxen, 14 sheep, a sword and a buckler, a pair of horse hopples of iron, a breast plate and a bridle, from William Pereson of West Sleekburn; 5 sheep from Richard, of West Sleekburn; 6 oxen, a heifer, 20 sheep, from John Brown, of West Sleekburn; 5 horses, a saddle, a pair of sheets, a shift, a blanket, and a dagger, from John Hunter, of Cambois. The leaders in this wholesale plunder were members of one of the best families in the county. Gentlemen thieves were common at this period. Documents of a similar nature preserved in the public repositories of the kingdom, would fill many volumes; and they develop an almost inconceivable amount of theft, merely as a trade; of hatred, long and deeply cherished, until an opportunity for revenge should arise; of bravery worthy a better cause; of well-planned stratagem and open violence, attended too frequently by

the most savage cruelty. In short, it appears a matter of surprise that the county at large within fifty miles of the borders should have been inhabited at all, as neither by night nor day could a man reckon upon his life or substance for a single hour. Though more than a year had elapsed between the theft and the inquisition, there is nothing said about the delinquents having been called to account for their crime. So feeble was the action of the law at that period, especially towards men in their position, that in all likelihood they would never be made to answer for their conduct. Indeed, if Hodgson's pedigree of the Ogles of Choppington be correct, the above Sir Robert Ogle died a baron in 1469.

In our account of Blyth we noticed the Dutch ship of war following into the harbour and capturing a Dunkirk privateer, and a portion of the crews of both ships proceeding as far as Bedlington, where ten of each party were apprehended. We now give Mr. Carnaby's letter to the bishop asking advice what to do with his prisoners.

"Bedlington, 16th August, 1635. Whereas there has been a Dutch man-of-war, with 90 musketeers on board, which has driven a Dunkirk privateer with 30 men on board him, into the harbour of Blyth; they did pursue him so hard, and shot at him when he was in the harbour, that the crew were forced to leave their ship, and betake themselves to flight. And the Dutchmen did so hotly pursue them with a dozen muskets, and sounding a trumpet, as put the country in a great fright. Ten of the Dunkirkers sought shelter in Bedlington, whereupon notice was given to me, and I have taken measures to detain both them and ten of the

Dutchmen who pursued them, and have them confined in this town till your lordship's pleasure be known. The remainder of the Dutchmen have put to sea, and have taken the Dunkirk ship with them, but they still lie before the haven till such time as they can have these men at liberty, or else know further of your lordship's pleasure; which I have partly engaged they shall know before to-morrow night. I have had some parley with the Hollanders' ship, about their taking away the Dunkirk ship with them, and a letter has been brought to me from the captain, which I have made bold to send herewith to your lordship. I should have made bold to have troubled your lordship with many more passages of this business, but that the bearer of this will be able to certify to your lordship most of the particulars. Thus desiring your lordship to consider some speedy course to be taken in this case, because the whole shire is both in great fear and great trouble, and at some charge with the keep and watching of these twenty men. Besides it is much to be feared, that the Dutchmen may come on shore with their land soldiers and take away their men by force. Now, while I am writing, I perceive by the confession of one of the Dunkirkers, that he with his associates have sunk and burnt about four-score of the Dutch fishing vessels, and the Dutch endeavour what they can to be revenged on them, and this is their quarrel. The press and outcry of these people is so confused, and this letter requiring such speedy delivering into your hands, makes me leave off somewhat abruptly. Therefore, wholly commending the ordering of these affairs to your lordship's grave consideration, and

hoping your lordship will send such directions by some one whom your lordship thinks fittest to employ, and may take speedy course therein. And so I rest,

“Yours, to be commanded,

To the

“WM. CARNABY.”

Bishop of Durham.

It is probable the bishop returned by the bearer of this letter verbal instructions to Mr. Carnaby, hence our inability to trace the *denouement* of this affair.

**A RENTAL OF LANDS IN BEDLINGTON, DUE TO THE LORD
BISHOP OF DURHAM, IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I.**

	£	s.	d.	
Henry Milburn, half farm	0	10	6	Cuthbert Watson, a farm £1 1 0
Jane Walker, half farm ..	0	10	6	Catherine Wilson, a farm.. 1 1 0
George Marshall, a farm ..	1	1	0	Robert Mill, a farm 1 1 0
Robert Lawson, a farm....	1	1	0	Richard Brown, half farm 0 10 6
John Skipsey, a farm	1	1	0	Thomas Swan, a farm 1 1 0
William Hunter, half farm 0 10 6				Mary Cuthbert, half farm 0 10 6
William Watson, a farm ..	1	1	0	Thomas Michelson, a farm 1 1 0
				Thomas Scott, a farm 1 1 0

There are 13 cottages and garths belonging to the several tenants, copyholders, at one shilling rent for every cottage.

FREEHOLDERS IN BEDLINGTON.

Ralph Baytes, of Hallywell, per annum	2s. 10d.
Mr. Fenwick, of Prudhoe, per annum	14s. 6d.

LEASEHOLDERS.

Henry Milburne, the demesne house and garth	£0 8 0
John Errington, one farm	1 1 0
" more for acquittal	0 4 0
" for one other farm	3 16 9
The wife of William Milburn, for three farms and a half	3 13 9
Bedlington Water Mill	4 0 0
Bedlington Colliery	2 0 0

**THE YEARLY RETURN OF ALL THE LANDS IN THE COUNTY
PALATINE OF DURHAM, AS THEY WERE RETURNED BY
THE ASSESSORS UPON OATH, UPON THE SUBSIDY ACT OF
1s. 2d. IN THE POUND, UPON THE CLEAR YEARLY VALUE
OF ALL THE LANDS, &c., &c. 1670-1.**

Bedlington Parish and Shire, <i>in toto</i>	£34 7 8
Earl of Carlisle, for lands in Netherton	70 0 0

Sir William Middleton, for lands in Choppington	70	0	0
" " for lands in West Sleekburn	65	0	0
Sir Thomas Longarill, for lands in Camboise ..	60	0	0
EAST SLEEK BURN—			
John Davy £12. Mr. Metham £8. Mr. Ewbank £8. Mr. Crowe	8	0	0
Gawin Pearson	8	0	0
Edward Milburn, for salt pans	30	0	0
Charles Reah, for colliery	10	0	0
Mr. Elias Smith, for Glebe lands	60	9	0
Doctor Wood, for the rectory	60	0	0
For two parts of the town lands of Bedlington, George Potts and Thomas Potts, and other tenants ..	130	0	0
For the third part of the town lands of Bedlington, Mrs. Mary Fenwick, Thomas Smart, and James Watson, tenants	80	0	0
For the copyhold cottages, Bedlington	8	13	4

Of the early Saxon church of which Bedlington could once boast there are now no remains. The present church, before the recent alterations, was described by Randal as small, covered with lead, and having an old tower. Before 1818, it consisted of a chancel 32 ft. by 17 ft.; nave, 52 ft. by 24 ft.; and tower, 16 ft. by 9½ ft. A Norman window, rich in moulding and of unusual character, stands in the western front of the tower. The chancel was re-built in 1736. In January, 1773, during a high wind, the church, which had been newly covered, was entirely unroofed. In 1818, being too small for the congregation, an addition was made to it on the north side of the nave; the alterations cost £713, of which sum £616 was raised by subscription, the remainder by rate. In the *Blyth Gleaner* for September of that year, it is named that on Sunday, the 13th instant, Bedlington church was opened after its enlargement, when the vicar preached fifty-five minutes on Isaiah liv, 13, and wearied his hearers as well as himself. A collection of £15 was made after the sermon, to provide books for the Sunday school.

From the overcrowded state of the churchyard, it became necessary a few years ago to form a new cemetery; for this purpose the bishop of Durham generously gave a piece of ground by the side of the road leading to Netherton; when completed, it was consecrated on the 1st of July, 1856, by the bishop of Manchester.

The greater part of the trees that now ornament the churchyard were planted by vicar Ellison in 1726. When the foundations of the new part of the church were making, there were found the remains of a man, supposed to be those of Cuthbert Watson, a noted sleep-walker, who was killed upon the spot where they were found. He had risen in his sleep on the 14th February, 1669, and was in the act of climbing the north buttress of the tower with great ease and firmness; but a person passing by at the time, and dreading the danger of his situation, spoke to him, at which he awoke, fell, and was instantly killed. This story is supported by the current tradition of the place, by an entry said to be in the parish register, and by the above date and the words "Watson's wake" cut upon the buttress.

According to Reginald, the church of Bedlington belonged to the convent of Durham before the time of bishop Carilophth, 1080, and was held by one of the secular canons, as his prebend, from this period until it was given to the monks of Durham in the time of bishop Flambard, 1120. From this period till 1247 it was a rectory in the presentation of the convent, the monks reserving unto themselves a mark, the tithe corn of Netherton, and a toft in Bedlington. In 1247, bishop Farnham appropriated the church and its revenues to

the office of sacrist in the convent of Durham, to aid in the building of the nine altars which had been begun five years before; and instituted a vicarage, which he endowed with 45 marks per annum, arising from the whole altarage, excepting however the tithe of hay from the bishop's demesne, two tofts on the east side of the church, and eight acres of arable land. The great tithes of the parish of Bedlington were, before the dissolution, received by the sacrist, and their value expended upon the furniture of the church of Durham. They were re-granted to the dean and chapter in 1541, and after being a while in lease, were annexed to the eleventh prebend, with the exception of the corn tithes of Cambois, which, with the small tithes of the whole parish and a glebe, constituted the endowment of the vicarage. Incumbents of Bedlington during the time it was a rectory:—Lumbertus Germium, vicar of Bedlington, occurs as a witness to a deed about Plessey, 1267; Richard de Claxton, 1278; William de Blakely, the last rector, 1311. Vicars:—Simon de Derlington, in 1324; Gilbert de Burdon, 1325; Thomas de Normanton 1336; Anthony Fossor, 1344; John Lumbard, 1350; John Pays, 1379; William de Shylburn, 1390; Thomas Cowten, 1411; William Doncaster, 1418; John Stillington, 1419; John Bland, 1420; Richard Langeake, 1466; [in 1469, Mr. R. Nykke, the vicar-general of the diocese, sequestered the profits of Bedlington church for the many defects and decays in the mansion house of the vicarage, and houses and buildings of the same, and appointed Thomas Fleming, bailiff of the liberty of Bedlington, keeper of the sequestration]; Gilbert Gray-

burne, 1471; Elias Bell, 1477; John Rawson, 1478; Thomas Hall, 1484; Robert Pritchard, 1489; [January 22nd, 1497, the proceeds of this living were sequestered on account of divers defects and want of repairs in the vicarage house]; Thomas Lee, 1498; Robert Davell, L. L. D., 1527, [he was a man of considerable note in his time; he was archdeacon of Northumberland in 1518 and 1541; his name occurs as a canon of Exeter; and on the 29th of May, 1541, he became prebendary of Halm, in the cathedral of York: he died in 1551. This divine managed to hold the living of Bedlington through all the religious changes that occurred during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary]; William Watson, Dec. 7th, 1557; Robert Greenwell, 1575; Richard Wargner, 1578; Henry Nanton, 1581; Thomas Colmore, M. A., 1603; Richard Colmire, B.A., 1609; Elias Smith, preacher of God's word, 1643 (he was ejected during the Protectorate); John Darnton, an intruder (he was put in by sequestration); Elias Smith, restored, died 1676; Charles Cowling, 1676; Francis Woodmas (who was a capital Greek scholar, and wrote notes on several of the Greek fathers, all which are contained in one manuscript volume in the College library at Durham), 1696; John Ellison, B. A., 1719; he was eldest son of Nathaniel Ellison, D. D., vicar of Newcastle. In 1765 there was printed a satirical composition in rhyme, entitled "The Will of a certain Northern Vicar," with a codicil annexed, purporting to be written by Ellison, vicar of Bedlington. Report assigned the authorship to the Rev. William Cooper, rector of Kirby Wiske; but he

disavowed it by advertisement in the *Newcastle Courant*, December 7th, 1765. The satire was lately republished in Newcastle. Thomas Drake was inducted 13th June, 1774, after the death of Ellison, and died June 26th, 1788. Henry Cotes was inducted September 28th, 1788; and he died February 8th, 1835, aged 76. Cotes was a man of considerable literary attainments, and was the author of "Sketches of Truth," in three volumes, and several other works both in prose and poetry. In the field adjoining the churchyard stands the following singular tombstone, dated 1801, erected by Cotes to the memory of a favourite horse called Wheatley :

Steady the path ordained by nature's God,
And free from human vices, Wheatley trod ;
Yet hoped no future life—his all he liv'd—
The turf he grazed his parting breath received,
And now protects his bones ; disturb him not,
But let one faithful horse respected rot.

Weddell, the Plessy poet, in one of his rhyming effusions attacked the vicar anent the tombstone, accusing him of having shot the horse to save its keep, corn and hay being dear at the time. The vicar's long sermons also brought into exercise the rhyming talent of Bob Charlton. One Sabbath morning, on Cotes entering the vestry, he found a paper on the table containing the following expostulation :

I pray Mr. Vicar, Do try to be quicker,
In teaching us miserable sinners,
Our bellies are croaking, And its truly provoking,
To be kept so long from our dinners!"

Cotes was succeeded by the Rev. E. C. Ogle, M.A.

The present vicar of Bedlington is the Rev. C. T. Whitley, M. A., hon. canon of Durham, and rural

dean. He was inducted into the vicarage in 1854, on the resignation of the Rev. E. C. Ogle.

The register books of the parish of Bedlington contain some curious entries, one or two samples of which we give :

"Andrew Nicholson was baptized ye 30th day of Novemb., 1647, but i know not wn he wil either marie or die."

"Isabel Fairbairn, of Cambous, weddow, was bueried Janewairy ye 15th, being starved in ye snow coming from Morpeth, found dead in West Sligbourn feild. 1668."

"James Watson and Jann Ellet, both in Bedlington, was married Novemb. ye 27th, 1672. William Gray should have mairied ye above said woman that same day, but ye above said James Stoll away ye brid and Rod away wish hir of ye wedden even, soe ye said Gray Rod to Harbourn for ye brid but she was gone, soe ye bridgroom with his men cam home with out ye brid, whoe had provided a gret wedding, and all peple cam to ye wedden but noe brid was to be found. Soe ye said James had married ye brid."

Bedlington came down to the end of the last century with very much of the old-world appearance which it had presented for many generations. The greater portion of the houses were of one story, and thatched. There were still living in the village a few representatives of its ancient respectable families, bearing the title of "laird." The kind of houses in which this class resided 150 years ago may still be seen in the house occupied by Mr. Robert Swan; it was the dwelling of the Skipsey family. May 17th, 1632, William Skipsey, of Bedlington, yeoman, left his body to be buried in the church of Bedlington, near his father; and his customary farm in Bedlington, to his eldest son John, and his heirs. There are several entries of the Skipsey family in the church registers of this parish; there were branches of the family in the adjoining parishes. In 1572 Gawin Skipsey held two farms in Hartley, of Sir John Delaval. In 1726 there was a Skipsey lived in Cowpen, who was

one of the four-and-twenty for the chapelry of Horton. Mrs. Barker occupied the best house in the village; she was the last of the Purvis family. In the *Newcastle Journal*, of January 14th, 1764, we have the account of her wedding, and according to the custom of the time, both the amount of the fortune, and the personal appearance of the bride are given: "On Thursday last was married at Bedlington, Mr. Christopher Barker, of North Shields, to Miss Purvis, of Bedlington, a beautiful young lady, with a fortune of £2,000." Miss Purvis was the only daughter of Thomas Purvis, Esq., of Bedlington, and sister and sole heir of Henry Purvis, Esq., of the same place, who died March 21st, 1782. Charles Dalston Barker, son of Mrs. Barker, inherited the estate of his uncle. Mrs. Barker lived to the long age of 88; she died in 1819. There is a tablet in the church dedicated to her memory by her son.

Mr. George Marshall is the only representative of the ancient Bedlington lairds. In 1578, the Rev. Richard Marshall, of Stainton-in-the-street, bequeathed to Geo. Marshall and his wife, of Bedlington, 10s.; to the daughters of Anthonie Marshall, of Bedlington, 20s.; "also I will and charge my executors to make supplication to the bishop for their inheritance, according to the custom of Bedlington." In 1635, George Marshall was one of the jury in Bedlington to which was referred the question of the extent of the bishop's rights in Bedlingtonshire. Among the many respectable families connected with Bedlington in former times was that of Fenwick. Mr. Fenwick, of Prudhoe, was one of the two freeholders in Bedlington in 1630, and Robert

Fenwick, Esq., of Bedlington, was representative in parliament for Northumberland in 1664 and 1656. He purchased the manor of Bedlington, and Choppington farm, for the sum of £1,296, when parliament offered the lands of the Bishop of Durham for sale, 21st January, 1649. On the 7th June, 1657, Robert Ogle, of Estington, gentleman, gave information before the House of Commons that Sir Richard Collingwood, of Brandon, inveighed against Robert Fenwick, Esq., a member of the present parliament, saying, "he was a base fellow; his father was hanged for felony, and he did wonder who sent him to parliament." This Robert Fenwick resided at Bedlington, in the old hall, and in 1661 compiled a long and elaborate pedigree of the Fenwick family, a copy of which, with its numerous evidences, drawings of seals, &c., is now in the College of Arms; and Hodgson, the county historian, says, "I have also a M.S. copy of antiquities of the family of Ogle, presented to Henry, then duke of Newcastle, by Robert Fenwick, Esq., in the year 1664. Perhaps he was the same Robert Fenwick for whom, upon letters from General Leven, there was an order of parliament, February 3rd, 1647, for a thousand pounds for his losses and good affections. But he did not long enjoy his purchase; on the Restoration of king Charles II, in 1660, it went back to the bishop of Durham.

The men of Bedlington always evinced great readiness to fight the battles of their country, either on sea or land. During the great war England waged with Napoleon many young men of the village enlisted into the army, and served in the Peninsular war. Old Will

Corby the sexton, had four of his sons engaged in that conflict. Thomas was in the gallant 42nd, or Highland Watch, and with Sir John Moore in his celebrated retreat to Corunna. Alison, in his account of the battle of Corunna, says of the 42nd, "But Moore was at hand to repair the disorder. Instantly addressing the 42nd regiment with the animating words, 'Highlanders, remember Egypt!' and bringing up a battalion of the Guards to its support, he again led them forward to the charge. The shock was irresistible; borne back at the point of the bayonet the enemy were again driven into Elvira, from whence after a desperate struggle they were finally expelled with great slaughter. In this decisive conflict, however, Sir John Moore received a mortal wound." Thomas continued to serve with Wellington till at Burgos, where he received a wound of which he died. George also served in most of the Spanish campaigns without injury; after the peace he was sent with his regiment to the West Indies, where he remained his appointed time, but on his passage home sickened and died. Robert was in the 2nd Foot, or Queen's regiment; he was also with Sir John Moore in his retreat to Corunna, keeping his place in the march till Corunna was reached, but the last stage in that terrible night march from Lugo broke him down. The night was cold and tempestuous; a severe storm of wind and rain, mixed with sleet, burst upon the troops, and he died through sheer fatigue. George Rutter was in the 2nd with Robert Corby, and outlived that terrible night, and took his place in the battle which followed; he was a remarkably hardy man, and served through

the whole of the war, never having had a day's sickness. William was also in the army, but his health failing he was discharged; he was the only one of the Corbys who lived to return to his native village. Ralph Charlton was in the 3rd, or Scotch Fusilier Guards, in the Walcheren expedition, and afterwards served in the south of Spain, where he fought at the battle of Barossa under Sir Thomas Graham, but his health failing he was put into a veteran battalion.

Our chief object in giving the above names and facts has been to do honour to a family which did and suffered so much in defending old England against the most powerful and inveterate foe she ever had. Will Corby had a fifth son, John, who, but for the misfortune of losing a leg in his youth, would have certainly been a soldier too. He was never heard to regret the loss of his limb, except on the ground that it prevented him entering the army. John, however, was a servant of the public, but he served in the church. In the *Blyth Gleaner*, for 1819, are the following verses on John Corby, late sexton at Bedlington, who died January 11th, 1819.

Here Corby lies in his last sleep,
Grave-digging was his occupation,
Or ring the bell, or church to sweep,
Or dust the pews upon occasion.
Lame of an arm, and but one leg,
Some charity Jack was deserving;
He was too bashful for to beg,
He rather did prefer half starving.
His speech and manners were uncouth,
But firm and staunch upon occasion,
He always bluntly spoke the truth,
Without the smallest deviation.
To hunt the fox was his delight,
To get sly reynard in his clutches,
He stopt the fox-holes in the night,
All day he hunted on his crutches.

Whene'er the fox was in full view,
No footman with Jack could keep stitches,
So swift he on his crutches flew,
And sprung quite over dykes and ditches.

But now his sporting is all past,
We trust his faults are all forgiven,
'Tis hoped he will meet with at last,
All honest sportsmen safe in heaven.

The splendid seam of coal that underlies the whole shire was scarcely touched till within the last forty years. There is no mention of coal mines in the shire at the time of the compilation of the Boldon Buke, but bishop Pudsey, about that period, gave to the monks at Newminster the salt pans upon the Blyth, in Bedlingtonshire, and the water and fisheries there. In 1556 Newminster had in Blyth-nook, *firma septum salinarum, cum uno garnar et miner carbonum*, rent £14. This would be at what is now called the High Pans. In 1635, the jury of Bedlington, in a list of the bishop's rights say, "there is only one coal pit wherein coals are wrought, and two other pits sunk but no coal as yet, rent received for the colliery was £2." In 1693 a lease was granted to Edward Arden, Esq., of the coal mines opened, and to be opened, within the lordship of Bedlingtonshire, with wayleave; 21 years at 40s. per annum, and 40s. per annum for every new pit. Way-leave points to the coals being shipped. There was at the beginning of this century a small colliery at Bedlington, the coal from which was sent to the staith quay, below the iron works, and there put into keels and sent down to Blyth, where they were shipped just off the ferry boat landing. Netherton colliery was sunk in 1818, and since that time the Bedlington coal company have brought into

operation their large concern at Bedlington, Barrington, and West Sleekburn. The former operation of the iron works we noticed in our account of Blyth; they were lately resumed by Messrs. Mounsey and Co., who did a large business, but are again closed. The former industrial occupations of Bedlington were nailmaking and weaving; about sixty years since Edward Charlton employed 20 nail-makers; William and Henry Smith, 14; and William Kirkup about 12; but the trade has gradually declined, and now Mr. Jas. Gibson is the only master nail-maker. For centuries weaving had been carried on in the village; and till within the memory of the present generation, it was considered an indispensable female accomplishment to be able to spin with the little wheel, and in the country parts most females could manage the big wheel—the latter to spin wool, the former tow. The first top-coat worn by the writer was of his grandmother's spinning. It was matter of great pride with the thrifty housewives of former days to possess a large stock of linen of their own spinning. In the inventory, 1590, of Elinor Widdrington, of Choppington, widow of a scion of the great house of Widdrington, who farmed there, she had "four score pairs of sheets, valued at £40," though there was only three bedsteads and four pairs of blankets in the house. It is still in the recollection of some old people that there were from ten to twelve weaving establishments in the village, one of which, Graham's, kept five men employed. But the factory system has entirely set aside domestic spinning and village weavers. The parish of Bedlington, which contains 9,011 acres, is rapidly rising

in value and population : in 1801 it was 1,422 ; in 1861 it had risen to 8,300.

Cambois is a small seaport village, and seat of a township. A great export of corn and grindstones from the high and low quays, and a considerable import of Norway timber and deals, and of limestone from Beadnel and Sunderland in boats, was carried on when Stephen Watson, Esq., of North Seaton was conducting his commercial enterprises with great spirit and success : he was a man of considerable note in his day, and lived to a great age, long known as old Justice Watson. Much of this trade continued during the war with the republic of France and Napoleon ; but about the peace it gradually declined, and for many years seldom a sail entered the port ; but since North Seaton colliery has been opened a few small vessels have been loading coal there. The chapel of Cambois was in existence in 1204, for in that year it was confirmed to the monks of Durham, by King John, as a member of the church of Bedlington. Hodgson says of the chapel, "The barn which contains the thrashing mill of the farm premises is by some thought to have been a chapel ; but as it has a large fire-place in the north wall I imagine it was the manor house of the Denum family. In its south wall there is a trefoil window of one light, and of a shape corresponding with the architecture of the 14th century ; it is said that the chapel stood on a green mound, between the sea and the old mansion house, now called the chapel hill, which very much resembles a tumulus of the ages before Christianity." Recent explorations prove that Hodgson's conjecture respecting

the tumulus was correct, for in lowering the mound in 1861 human remains were found, which from their position, showed they had been interred in pagan-saxon times, at least twelve hundred years ago. In 1350 Ralph de Ellyngeham possessed an estate of part of this manor, and a fishery in the "Wanspik" at a rent of 17s. 6d. a year. Some of the proprietors of the fishery at that period had a coble for fishing in the main sea, of the value of 10s. a year.

Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland, died May 21st, 1426, possessing among other things the manor of Cambois. The inquest states that the tenant of "Cambhouse" at that time paid for it to the bishop a rent of £4 19s. a year, and did suit at the lord's court at Bedlington; ground his corn growing upon the manor at the lord's mill, to the sixteenth measure; had within it the site of a manor then waste, and of no value; but that there were four messuages and six bovates of arable land, worth beyond reprises 40s.; twenty acres of meadow, worth 20s.; and one hundred acres of pasture, worth 16s. 4d. The Lawsons afterwards became owners of the estate. In 1626, Henry Lawson, Esq., sold the manor of Cambois to Andrew Young, Esq. The Ridley family have been in possession of it for many years. The duke of Portland, as heir of the Ogles, had a thirty-second part of it, which he sold to the late Sir M. W. Ridley; and Mr. Robert Briggs, by purchase, became owner of a sixty-fourth part of it, which his son William subsequently sold to the Riddles, who are now the sole proprietors of the township.

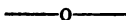
The new winning of the Cowpen Coal Company close

to the village, has broken the quiet of centuries. On the links a great number of houses has been erected, and are occupied by a busy population. The Colliery is in full operation, being fitted up with the latest and most approved appliances for raising coal and pumping the water. Indeed, the machinery connected with the workings is something remarkable. The winding engine is a double cylinder, 36 inches in diameter, and 6 feet stroke, with a drum of 25 feet. The time occupied in running up or down, and changing four tubs, is fifty seconds. This powerful engine is capable of raising 1,400 tons of coals in twelve hours, besides affording ingress and egress to the workmen. The pumping engine is below ground near the shaft. It is a 48-inch cylinder, with 4 feet stroke, and is supplied by four boilers. The water is raised 48 feet from the standage by the back-end piston rod, by means of a crank motion, into a cistern; and from thence is forced to bank by a double-acting set of force pumps, with rams ten inches in diameter. Both the rams have the same stroke as the engine. The pumps are twelve inches in diameter. They are assisted by an air-vessel at the bottom, thirty feet by two feet six inches in diameter, supplied by a small pump. The engine pumps about twenty-five gallons each stroke. The nominal power of this engine is 235 horses, and it runs between twenty and thirty strokes per minute. The actual horse power is 106.84. The lowest pressure at which the engine works is 27lbs. The quantity of water pumped is 300 gallons per minute, and it is forced up 250 yards in one vertical column. A railway has been made from the pit to the

link-end, where the coals are put on board the vessels with the greatest facility. At one of the staiths screw colliers can take in coals from two spouts simultaneously. The first shipment of Cambois coals took place 27th of June, 1867.



APPENDIX.



CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY.

THE following is a summary, in chronological order of events which will be interesting to the majority of the readers of this book, though for sundry reasons they have not been incorporated in the body of the work.

1673. During a great storm on the 18th January, thirty-nine ships were cast away on the Northumberland coast.

1723. Admiral George Delaval, of Seaton Delaval, met his death in the month of June, by a fall from an unruly horse, as he was riding out after dinner up the avenue, not far from his house. His death occurred shortly after he had finished the building of the beautiful Hall.

1739. On the 4th of September, Michael Curry, for the murder of Robert Shevil, was executed at the Westgate, Newcastle. The murder was committed in one of the rooms of the *Three Horse Shoes Inn*, Hartley, of which Shevil was the landlord. Before his execution, Curry delivered a written confession to the chaplain, in which he admitted himself guilty of the murder, but denied that Shevil's wife had urged him to it. His body was taken from the place of execution direct to Hartley, and hung in chains at a point on the coast ever after known as "Curry's Point."

1745. About this time Boca Chica received its out-

landish name. Two seamen belonging to the place had served on board a ship-of-war, under Admiral Vernon, at the siege of Carthagena, a seaport in South America, in 1741. The entrance into the harbour was termed *Boca Chica* (i.e., little mouth), and was defended by several forts, the whole of which were taken by the British forces. Those seamen having returned home in recounting their exploits at the siege so frequently used the words *Boca Chica*, that one of their companions jocularly gave the name to the place of their residence; the new name took with the public, who at once adopted it, and to this day *Boca Chica* has continued to be the name of the northern portion of the High Pans.

1748. In the night of August 28th, thirteen French prisoners made their escape from Tynemouth by means of a hole which they had dug under the foundations of the prison into a garden adjoining. They went direct to Cambois, near Blyth, where the first four of them got into a boat and made to a sloop lying there laden with iron, cut her cable, and went to sea. The sloop was afterwards seized at the Brill, and with her cargo of iron sent back to her owners.

1765. Feb. 18th. A cod fish was sold at Blyth to Mr. Harbottle, of Bedlington, in the belly of which was found a gold ring. March 5th. A storm of snow attended with a strong gale of wind, came on this evening with such violence, and continued all night, that not only many flocks of sheep were drifted, but several persons lost their lives by being exposed to the excessive cold, and the severity of the weather. The Plessy railway was drifted up, and the labourers employed to clear away the Blyth end were allowed drink to the amount of £3 14s. 2d.

1766. In the last week in September a shipmaster's wife at Blyth was delivered of five male children, all likely to live.—*Chatto's Collection.*

1767. Was thrown upon the sands at Blyth a very rare fish, weighing from 70 to 80lbs., shaped like the sea-bream; the length was three and a half feet, the breadth from back to belly almost two feet, and the thickness from side to side not above six inches. A long and minute description of it is given in *Gilhespie's*.

1770. About this date a murder was committed on Blyth Links. Mr. Mason, an officer of customs, had been to Newcastle for a month's pay of the customs establishment here. He had to perform the journey on foot, and having reached the link house on his return, he went into the public house there to rest himself and get some refreshment. He there found two men of the name of Ross, father and son, staymakers in Blyth. They left before Mason: he shortly followed, and was never more seen alive. From the time of Mason being missed it was suspected that these men had robbed and murdered him, but the body could not be discovered. More than 20 years after, the remains were found on the links, opposite Pulley's Gate, between the first and far link houses. The discovery was made by some lads who were jumping on the links and, displacing some sandy soil, exposed to view the remains of a human body. A pair of silver shoe buckles and some buttons were found, of a peculiar make, and of a kind known to have been on the coat of Mason, and so identifying the remains as those of Mason. Though the murderers escaped the gallows, the popular belief was that Providence and their guilty consciences punished them worse than hanging. Their health declined, poverty overtook them, and the people always treated them as guilty beings unfit for human society.

1776. Jan. 26. In the evening a heavy fall of snow came on and continued without cessation all that night and the next day; the snow, by the strong gale that

was raging, was thrown into such immense drifts on the high roads as to render most of them impassable. The frost became so intense that all the rivers were frozen. Many persons on the various roads perished. Two farmers, going from Newcastle to their home near Earsdon, were lost on Killingworth Moor; their horses were found the next day. January 29.—Some hundreds of men were employed in clearing the roads; those so engaged near Morpeth found a horse, with a saddle, dead in the snow.

1799. April 18th. Matthew W. Ridley (the late Sir M. W. Ridley) attained his 21st year. The day was celebrated with unusual glee at Blyth. A grand dinner was given to the principal inhabitants; and in the evening there was a general illumination. June 7th. During a dreadful thunder storm which occurred on this day the electric fluid struck the house of Mr. Timothy Duxfield, farmer, opposite the "Willow Tree," Newsham. Mrs. D. was killed; and her daughter Margaret was so much injured that she never regained her health, and died on the same day five years afterwards.

1800. January. In this month no less than 69 out of 71 coal-laden vessels were wrecked on their passage from the northern ports to London. One of these was the *Peggy*, William Taylor, master. The vessel sailed from Seaton Sluice on New Year's day, and foundered with all her crew. The master was the son of Robert Taylor, who was foreman to Mr. Hannay for many years. Matthew Hunter, uncle to the writer, was one of the crew.

1803. January 8-10. There was a tremendous storm with the wind at east, which did a great deal of damage to the shipping on the coasts of Northumberland and Durham.

1804. A brig named the *Mediator*, belonging to Mr. Bates, took fire at Cowpen Quay, and burnt to the water's edge.

1805. August 16. Thomas Clare, a private in the Staffordshire militia, was executed at the Westgate, Newcastle, for the murder of William Todd, of Hartley, which was committed during the time the regiment was encamped on Whitley links. (Dec. 5,) Thanksgiving day for the victory of Trafalgar.

1806. April 14, 15. Hard gale of wind from N.E. with sharp frost, and heavy fall of snow. (Dec. 25,) A furious storm of wind from the west, accompanied with rain, which increased to a hurricane. Beside other damage it blew down the northernmost house in Bath terrace.

1808. May 17. Died at Seaton Delaval, John, Lord Delaval, aged 80 years. The corpse was taken to London in great funeral pomp. The last of the Delavals who resided at the Hall. August. The *John and Betsy*, Geo. Norris, master, foundered with all hands in a heavy N.E. gale.

1809. October 8. This day, John Storey, officer of customs, Cambois, had been to sea fishing, and on his return at nightfall two of his daughters went to the landing place to meet him—the eldest to help her father to moor the boat, and the youngest to carry a light. The light suddenly disappearing the elder went to ascertain the cause; neither of the daughters returning, the father went in search of them, and to his horror discovered that both had fallen into the river and were drowned. The father was so overpowered with grief at the loss of these two children, that he forgot the duty which he owed to his wife and six remaining children, and in a fit of despondency on the 25th he terminated his life by casting himself into the river. The ages of the two daughters were respectively 22 and 11 years.

1810. This winter, while the ships were laid up, the *Eclipse*, belonging to John and Mark Marshall, took fire and was greatly damaged. She was repaired, but in the spring of 1817 was lost with all hands, on her passage to Hamburgh. October. On the day after the celebration of the jubilee of George III, The *Eagle*, Cuthbert Gibson, sailed from Blyth; bad weather came on, and she foundered with all her crew; Gibson's eldest son was with him. Mr. Gibson was esteemed one of the cleverest masters belonging to the port at that period.

1811. January 3rd. Died, at Blyth, Mrs. Blakey, aged 104 years.

1813. February. The brig *Juno*, James Gray, master, while lying at the spout below the keel dock, took fire. A recent snow storm having covered the ground to a considerable depth, a number of men went to work and shovelled the snow into the burning ship, and after a time succeeded in extinguishing the fire, but not until the after part of the vessel had been nearly destroyed. April 16. Died at his house in Portland place, London, Sir Matthew White Ridley, Baronet, of Blagdon. He represented Newcastle in eight successive parliaments.

1814. January 15. An intense frost set in which froze up all the rivers. Large quantities of snow fell, and the frost did not break up till the 6th of February.

1815. The *Robert and Sarah*, belonging to Edward Watson, sailed at the close of the seamen's great strike, but never reached her destination. How she was lost was never ascertained. John Watson, brother of the owner, and William, the eldest son of William Clark, were with the rest of the crew all lost.

1817. June. The first number of the *Blyth Gleaner* was published.

1819. January 28. During a heavy gale from the east the *Ruby*, of North Shields, was driven on shore on Blyth sands. On the same day the *Betsy*, of South Shields, was shattered to pieces, and part of her driven on Blyth sands—crew perished.

1820. February. The brig *Minerva*, John Taylor master, being caught in a gale of wind in her upward passage ran for shelter to the Humber, on taking which she grounded on the Stony Binks, and soon went to pieces; the crew all perished. November 20. Blyth was illuminated, and other demonstrations of joy took place, on the House of Lords staying proceedings against Queen Caroline, consort of George the 4th.

1822. January 3. A fire took place at Seaton Delaval which in a few hours consumed the mansion house, which for grandeur and magnificence was unequalled in the North of England. This beautiful house was built for Admiral Delaval about the beginning of the last century by Sir John Vanburgh. Aug. 8, A large whale of the spermaceti kind came ashore at Line Burn. It measured 61 feet in length, and 37 feet in circumference. It yielded 9 tuns (158 gallons) of oil. This valuable fish having become a matter of dispute between two great landowners, the affair was ended by the Admiralty seizing it as a droit of the crown. Before it was cut up the curious flocked from all parts to view it, the people of Blyth going in hundreds, and all being gratified at having the opportunity of looking upon so mighty an inhabitant of the deep.

1823. February 2. During a severe gale of wind, accompanied by a dreadful snow storm, the *Nadir*, of Rochester, was lost upon Blyth rocks, and the *Sarah*, of North Shields, upon Newbiggin point, both crews being lost. The snow was drifted into immense heaps, pre-

venting ordinary business intercourse. The storm lasted for six weeks.

1824. August 10. Died at the Folly, aged 90, William Smith, father of William Smith the discoverer of New South Shetland.

1825. January 15. Died, aged 91, Margaret, the widow of Joseph Hopper, seaman. For 79 years she lived in the same room in Queen's lane. Her maiden name was Stoker—both the Hopper and Stoker families are extinct.

1825. February 2. A tremendous hurricane occurred during the night, followed next day by an extraordinarily high tide, which washed down a house next to the school room occupied by Mr. Hutchinson, the family (John Armstrong's) six in number, narrowly escaping drowning. The poor woman of the house had only been confined the previous evening.

1825. September 6. Died at Blyth, Mr. William Carr, aged 69 years. July 12, 1826.—Died, aged 82 years, Elizabeth Collier, sister of William Carr.

1827. January 14. The brig *Redbreast*, Edward Swan, foundered with all hands off Flambro' Head.

1828. September 9. This being the day on which Matthew White Ridley, Esq. (the present Baronet) attained his 21st year, at Blyth all business was suspended, and the gentlemen of the place, with the masters of ships in the harbour, dined together in celebration of the event. All the workmen at Cowpen colliery and Blyth employed by Sir M. W. Ridley, were liberally regaled, nor were the sailors in port forgotten.

1829. October 13. In a strong gale many ships were wrecked upon the coast. The sea was heavier at Blyth than had been known for 20 years. It, however, did but trifling damage, though at one time the houses on Cowpen Quay were in danger of being inundated, owing to the dyke giving way.

1831. April 18. A body of from 1200 to 1500 pitmen visited the collieries in the neighbourhood of Blyth and Bedlington, where they laid the pits off work—threatening to set fire to them if their orders were not immediately complied with. They also emptied the larder and cellar of the manager of Cowpen colliery. This was at the commencement of the Great Sirike, and when colliers had great faith in physical force.

1832. May. Blyth at this time partook of the intense political excitement which prevailed throughout the nation, in consequence of the rejection of the Reform Bill by the House of Lords. An immense open-air meeting was held on the links under the presidency of Matthew White Ridley, Esq., who was supported by the chief men of the town, when resolutions were unanimously carried, demanding "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." The Cholera Morbus, which made its appearance at Sunderland, in 1831, and Hartley where it was fatal in December, did not reach Blyth till the autumn of 1832. Peggy Lamb, a widow residing in Church street, was the first victim, and a day or two after Andrew Steel, a roper, died. It then spread with fearful rapidity, and before it subsided some eighty persons fell victims to the mysterious scourge.

1833. September 1. The schooner *John*, John Morrison, master, shortly after leaving Blyth encountered the tremendous gale that commenced on that day, during which she was lost with all hands on one of the sands south of the Humber. Oct. 31, The brig *Dorothy*, William Turnbull, master, was lost with all hands on her passage from Londonderry to London. Mr. Turnbull was far advanced in life, and had been a shipmaster for very many years.

1834. April 16. Died at Bedlington, aged 104 years, Mrs. Mary Gallon.

1835. Nov. 9. A golden eagle was shot near Blyth by Mr. Donkin Davis, of Waterloo. It was $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long, and its wings measured 7 ft. from tip to tip.

—1836. July 15. Died, in his 58th year, Sir M. W. Ridley, Baronet, M. P. for Newcastle. At the general election in 1812, on the retirement of his father, he was elected a representative for Newcastle. He sat during eight successive parliaments, and for a period of twenty-five years. Feb. 17. A tremendous hurricane from the N.E. was experienced on the east coast. At Hartlepool the sea rose seven feet above the highest tide mark previously recorded. A great number of vessels were wrecked all along the coast. The *Mars*, William Robinson, master, was driven on the shoals off Wells, on the Norfolk coast. She went to pieces, and the whole of her crew were drowned, the people on shore being unable to render any help. Dec. 23. A fall of snow commenced about mid-day, and continued without intermission till the morning of the 26th, by which time a prodigious quantity had accumulated, exceeding anything seen in the district since. The mails were greatly impeded.

1837. September. About the middle of this month a man named Thomas Holborn, 91 years of age, an inmate of Bedlington workhouse, and who had been completely blind for 12 years, had his sight suddenly restored while sitting at dinner.

1838. January 8. The first snow of the winter fell this day, and the storm continued almost without intermission till the end of the month. On the 14th and 15th the frost became intense; in some situations the thermometer was observed at 29 degrees below freezing. All the rivers in the district were frozen, nor did the frost completely break up till the beginning of March.

1839. January 7. The north of England was visited

by one of the most tremendous hurricanes ever experienced in this country. On the previous evening the barometer fell to 28 inches, and soon after midnight the wind shifted from S. to W. S. W., and gradually increased in fury till about eight in the morning, when its violence was frightful, and immense damage was done in all directions. The ropery on the links was entirely destroyed, garden fences were levelled, and buildings injured. The storm began to abate about two o'clock, and in the evening there was a considerable fall of snow, with frost. April 21st, While some workmen were sawing up an American oak tree in Blyth dock, they found a living toad in the middle of the solid timber, about eleven feet from the root. Aug. 12, This being the day appointed for the commencement of the "*sacred month*," some anxiety was manifested as to the results. Chartism had many ardent friends among the workmen of Cowpen colliery, and if confidence was to be placed in their declared intentions, an outbreak was imminent. The 98th regiment, commanded by the gallant Sir Colin Campbell, was dispatched to Seghill, Cramlington, and Cowpen square. When news of the soldiers' approach reached the square, the Chartists very discreetly concluded that their best course was to retreat, so they with great speed placed themselves and their boats on the north side of the river. The soldiers surrounded the square, and made search for arms, but did not find any. When the decisive moment had arrived physical force was found to be on the side of law and order. After this exhibition of military power the entire system of agitation suddenly collapsed.

1840. January 29. Died at Bedlington, aged 110 years, Mary Lorimer. She was at service at Morpeth during the rebellion of 1745, and perfectly remembered the terror inspired by it. Nov. 21, The brig *Hardwick*,

Ralph Ferguson, sailed from Blyth, and foundered with all her crew.

1841. March 15. As five men were repairing the shaft of Cowpen North Pit, a fall of old materials from the sides took place, which descending upon the *cradle* in which the men were suspended, precipitated four of them to the bottom of the shaft, killing them on the spot. The other man caught hold of some timber attached to the side of the shaft, and escaped. Those who were killed were—James Reay, Joseph Wright, Stephen Heron, and Francis Reay. William Heron was saved.

1843. February 3. A most disastrous storm arose this evening, and continued all night doing great damage. Two vessels, the *Blucher* and the *Rob Roy* were driven on shore at Newbiggin, and every soul on board of them perished. During the hurricane the *Rochester Castle*, belonging to Mr. Henry Debord, broke from her moorings and drove swiftly down the harbour on to the sands, where she fell over and was speedily a wreck. The *Malvina*, Francis Gray, also foundered with all hands, during this storm.

1844. February 23. This day a strong easterly gale, accompanied by a heavy fall of snow, commenced, and continued with unabated severity until the 26th. The roads were in many places blocked up, and at sea the loss of life and property was very great.

1845. January 26. The *Brothock*, George Cooper, master, during a heavy gale was driven on one of the sands off Yarmouth, when the entire crew were lost, together with seven men of a boat's crew that had gone to their assistance. November, Mr. Chapman, M. P., and Captain Washington, two of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the tidal rivers of the United Kingdom, held a court at Blyth on the business of their inquiry.

1846. March 10. A prize fight came off on Blyth links between William Gleghorn and Michael Riley which continued for two hours and a half, and resulted in Gleghorn being declared the victor. At the close of the fight Riley became insensible; he was put into a coach and conveyed to the *Ridley Arms*, where he expired at two o'clock next morning. Gleghorn was tried at the following assizes, and found guilty on the charge of manslaughter. Justice Cresswell in passing sentence said, "I can fancy nothing more degrading, nor disgraceful, than that two men should come together, either for money or the applause they are to gain from bystanders, to go and beat each other as long as they can stand up. But I look on those who are engaged in it as far less criminal than those who excite them to it. They are made the tools of others, and if I had before me any of those who could be proved to have promoted this fight, I should have shown by the sentence I should have passed upon them, how very great and serious an offence they have committed." Gleghorn was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. The disgrace of this brutal encounter in no way belonged to Blyth. The parties who made the match, as well as the pugilists, belonged to Newcastle, and Blyth was resorted to because they knew there were no effectual means at hand for preventing the encounter. June 1st, Died, aged 84 years, the Rev. W. Robertson, having been about 40 years minister of Ebenezer Chapel. September 9th, A second cargo of Netherton coals was dispatched from Blyth in the brig *Como*, for the use of Her Majesty's establishment, Osborne House. Nov. 20th, The brig *Sceptre* was wrecked at the entrance of Shields harbour, and the master, Emerson Ruddock, drowned. Dec. 12th, One of the greatest snow storms which has occurred during

the present century, commenced this morning. On the 13th no passenger train was able to leave Newcastle; on the 14th, by the employment of a great number of men, the lines were cleared, and though the storm continued the trains were got through on the morning of the 15th; after which the traffic was entirely suspended through the increased violence of the storm. The Blyth coaches were stopped for some days. On the 14th, the Tyne below Newcastle bridge was frozen over, and at Shields the ferry frequently occupied from two to three hours in crossing. At Newton-on-the-moor, the *Magnet* coach, with the mails, was buried 14 feet deep, and at many places on the roads the drifts were 20 feet deep, while out-door employment was completely suspended; but a thaw fortunately set in on the 18th, and the snow gradually disappeared.

1847. In the spring of this year an exciting race took place between two of our crack ships: the *Honour*, capt. James Heatley, and the *Blyth*, capt. Thomas Gibson. The *Honour* was built at the Dock in 1843; and from the first gained the reputation of being one of the fastest sailers along the coast; having not only outsailed the best ships out of Blyth, but had successfully competed with the fastest vessels then sailing out of the Tyne. In 1846, Bowman and Drummond built the *Blyth*, which was expected to be a match for the *Honour*. An opportunity soon presented itself for bringing their comparative swiftness to a trial. In Feb. as above, both the brigs were loading for London, when it was agreed they should run a race from Blyth to Gravesend. They left port together, and proceeded in company, without either ship gaining on the other, to Flambro' Head; they then separated, taking different courses. They sighted each other again off Cromer, the *Blyth* being a short distance a-head, which position she kept until the

Newarp was passed, when the *Honour* took the lead, and kept it, at varying distances, till she arrived at Gravesend; the *Honour* winning the race by less than a mile. The weather was fine, and the wind favourable, during the run, which lasted 48 hours. There was a large fleet on the coast proceeding southward; and as the racers came up to and passed these ships, the seamen perceived there was a race in progress; and the match being so equal gave extraordinary interest to the scene; and the interest and excitement spread and increased to the end of the race. It created equal excitement at Blyth—the event being looked upon as a sort of Nautical Derby. This race did as much credit to the port by the seamanship displayed on the occasion, as by the speed of the vessels. Both masters were able energetic seamen, and both were well seconded. The mate of the *Honour* was Mr. James Stephenson, afterwards well known as master of the *Guadiana*; and Mr. Thomas Armstrong, ship-owner, Waterloo, was then mate of the *Blyth*.

1848. Jan. 30, George Gardiner died, at a great age, near 90; was a native of Scotland; for many years the town crier—and a very strange character. Nov. 19, Blyth has been again visited by cholera; six or seven persons having died within three weeks.

1849. Oct 28, George Hunter, a collier at Cowpen colliery, was attacked this evening whilst returning home, by two men, and injured so severely that he died on the following day. The murderers were not discovered. Dec. 13, the brig *Sylph*, J. Short, master, on her passage from Dantzic to Glo'ster, was wrecked near Shapinsha, one of the Orkney islands. The crew, consisting of eight, were all drowned.

1850. Monday, June 27th, no fewer than 21 French vessels entered inwards, and 24 outwards, at the Blyth custom house, from and to foreign ports.

1851. Sept. 26, a severe gale of wind from the N.E. arose this day. Great losses occurred amongst the shipping on the coast. Two Blyth vessels with their crews were lost during the gale: the *Seaflower*, Wm. Jobling, and the *Pomona*, Robert Tynemouth. Tynemouth's wife and two children were lost with him. A large seal was also shot in Blyth river, being the second this year.

1852. Aug. 21, at this time one of the largest shoals of herrings ever known was off the coast of Northumberland; and 400,000 fish were caught this morning by the fishermen of Newbiggin alone. Oct. 24, married at Earsdon, Benjamin Lee to Isabella Baxter. The pair were both upwards of 73 years of age, and this was the bride's ninth appearance at the altar. The happy pair resided at Cowpen Quay. Nov. 12, the shops in Blyth were lighted with gas for the first time. Dec. 25th, a destructive hurricane from the S.W. arose, and kept increasing in intensity until the morning of the 27th, when its force was scarcely below the great tornado of 1839. Amongst its destructive effects at sea was the foundering of the *Salamander*, John Turner, of Blyth, and the *Maria*, William Sibetson, of Hartley. The crews of both ships were all lost, except one man belonging the *Maria*.

1853. February 18, one of the greatest falls of snow which had occurred for many years began on the 11th, and continued with little intermission during the ensuing week. The roads became quite impassable. Several lives were lost: among these was James Laidler, found dead on Blyth Links. Mar. 24, one of our fishing boats called the *Dean Swift* was capsized at sea, and the crew, named Armstrong, Dixon, and Foggin, were drowned. Oct 4, the *Marys & Anns*, Thomas Cowans, master, was wrecked in Carnarvon Bay. Four of the crew perished. Oct., the cholera again visited Blyth, and proved fatal to about 20; John Tully, innkeeper, being the last case.

1854. Feb. 24, the *Union Packet*, Isaac Parkinson, master, was wrecked on the French coast—crew lost. July 17, died, at Bedlington, Mr. Thomas Hair. The deceased, though without sight, was an exquisite performer upon the Northumberland pipes, and the violin; and was widely known and respected. Oct., extensive works for the purpose of giving the town a pure and plentiful supply of water, undertaken by Sir Matt. W. Ridley, were brought into successful operation, superseding the bringing of water to the town by carts, and the yet more primitive mode of females carrying water on their heads in skeels from the “far pit,”—the almost universal practice 50 years ago. Nov., a meeting of rate-payers agreed to light the streets with gas.

1855. Jan. 3, the skeleton of a female was found on Blyth Links. It became exposed by the wind having carried away a large portion of a sand hill. The depth it was found from the surface proved that it had been buried a very long time.

1856. Nov. 10, the *Britannia*, George Smith master, was lost, with all hands, on her passage from the Baltic.

1857. Jan. 9, a fearful storm broke over the north east coast of England, causing an immense loss of life and property at sea. Three Blyth ships were wrecked, and their crews lost. The *John Baker*, Henry Appleby, and the *Honor*, Benjamin Arkle, were lost near Hartlepool; and the *Epsilon*, David Williams, was driven on shore at Dunstanborough Castle. Sept. 22, the *Mary Ann*, John Heron master, was wrecked on her passage from the Baltic—crew perished.

1858. Jan. 27, the Central Hall, Waterloo, was opened by a grand tea party, followed by an oratorio. The large room is 76 feet length in the inside, 37ft. 6in. in breadth, and 23ft. high; is a most beautiful apartment, and affords ample accommodation for large public

gatherings. It has a convenient platform, and space for about 1000 visitors. It cost £1500, raised by shares of £1 each. The trustees of the Croft estate gave the site.

1859. April 16, the *William*, Thomas Jobling master, was lost in the North Sea, on her passage to the Baltic. All the crew lost.

1860. Sept. 26, the annual meeting of the Northern Union of Mechanics' Institutions was held at Blyth. In the morning the conference of delegates from the various institutions took place in the lecture hall of the Blyth institute: Sir M. W. Ridley in the chair. After the separation of the meeting, the delegates and their friends were taken out to sea in the *Britannia* steamer, and were thus shown the new works which had been erected for the improvement of the harbour. On landing, the party proceeded to the Ridley Arms, where they had luncheon. The chair was again taken by Sir Matthew, supported on the right by Rbt. Ingham, Esq. M.P., and on the left by the Hon. H. G. Liddell, M.P. The entire proceedings of the day passed off to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned. This gathering did much for the local institute, by awakening the inhabitants to the fact, that the town possessed an institution of great value and usefulness, which they had not till then properly appreciated. Oct. 4, the *Sir John Rennie*, Alex. Turner, foundered in the North Sea. One of the crew, Daniel Andrews, perished.

1861. March, a New Cemetery, containing about three acres, at the cost of £2500, was opened for the burial of the dead. Dec. 5th, the Bishop of Durham consecrated the moiety allotted to churchmen, and afterwards took luncheon with the burial board at the Star and Garter.

1862. June, at this time there was a Japanese embassy to this country; and, strange enough, they visited

North Seaton colliery. They went down the pit, and minutely inspected the engines, and the mode of conducting operations in coal mining, with the view of improving the way of getting coal in Japan, where coal is said to be very plentiful. June 12, the 3rd Northumberland Artillery Volunteers were practising blank cartridge firing at North Blyth. They had successfully fired thirteen rounds; but as John Manners and John Meggison were ramming home the cartridge for the fourteenth round, the gun suddenly exploded; and, being in the line of fire, both were instantly killed. October, on a Sunday evening a most fearful hurricane began. In its course it passed over England, Ireland, and Scotland, doing immense damage. The *Margaret Knight* was wrecked at Tory Island, on the coast of Ireland. Only the mate and a coloured seaman were saved. Nov. 28, Mr. Ranger held a Court in the Hall of the Mechanics' Institute, to define a boundary for Blyth, as a preliminary to adopting the Local Government Act. About 9 o'clock at night, a boat containing five pilots was on the look-out for ships coming into the harbour. The night was dark; a stiff breeze was blowing from the south, causing a considerable surf to break across the bar; and, being ebb tide, the ships were taking the bar under a press of canvass. The great speed at which the ships were coming in made it a hazardous operation to put a pilot on board. In attempting to board the *Sancho* the boat got under the brig's quarter and was capsized, when, unfortunately, John Burn, John Hogg, and William Dolmahoy, were drowned. Thomas Redford and William Armstrong, with great difficulty, were saved. Dec. 21, a heavy gale blew from N. N. E., accompanied by a very high tide, flowing over the quay almost its entire length; and the sea, which arose to a tremendous height, broke with

great violence against the east pier, and did great damage to both its stone and wooden sections.

1863. March 10, great rejoicings took place at Blyth in celebration of the marriage of the Prince of Wales. The day was kept as a holiday; flags flaunted from most of the houses, &c., and the ships were extremely gay. At 12 o'clock a royal salute was fired from the new battery at North Blyth: at one o'clock a free dinner of roast beef and plumb pudding, and ale, was given to 130 widows and poor persons at the Mechanics' hall: a similar treat was given to the poor of Cowpen Quay, &c. The Sunday school children walked in procession through Cowpen Quay, Waterloo, and Blyth, to the Links, where they were regaled with oranges and buns. At 8 o'clock there was a grand display of fire works, from a platform in Waterloo field. June 20, this day, the pupil teachers belonging to the church school, Bedlington, went to bathe on Cambois sands, when unfortunately two of them were drowned—John Grey and Robert Walker. Dec. 7, at this time there was a succession of storms raging all over England. The *John & William*, Thomas Blacklock master, coal laden; and the *Irene*, John Rogers master, corn laden from the Baltic, were out in these storms. Both vessels had foundered with their crews, as they were never again heard of.

1864. Feb. 22nd, a storm of snow, with keen frost. Since the year came in there has been more snow than for several years past. On the 13th, it blew a perfect hurricane from the west—considerable damage was done. August 6, the brig *Robert and Mary*, Stavers, struck on Anholt reef during a gale of wind, and became a wreck—crew drowned. The master's wife was lost with him. September 5, a monster Pic-nic, in connection with the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Association, was held.

on Blyth Links, and drew together many thousands of persons of both sexes. A similar gathering is now held annually. The first telegraph office in Blyth was opened in October of this year.

1865. Jan. 15th. The *Pocahontas*, Williams, foundered in the Bay of Biscay—crew lost. February 11th, owners of brig *Minerva* fined £5 for refusing to move from the spout after loading, in obedience to the order of the harbour master. Mar. 1, died, aged 59, Thomas Nicholson, mason, having been clerk in Blyth church about 30 years. 22nd, a heavy fall of snow at Blyth. Oct. 11th, a Newbiggin coble, laden with mussels from the Tees, foundered off Blyth—crew (four hands) lost. The brig *Harcourt* went on shore near St. Abbs' Head, when running for the Forth in a gale of wind—one man lost. Nov. 11, the barque *Constance*, W. C. Bergen, was wrecked near Windau—the master's son, and three others, were drowned.

1866. Nov. 4, the *Guadiana*, James Stephenson, from the Baltic, was wrecked on Winterton Ridge, when all hands were lost but the mate. The *Wild Huntress*, about this time was lost with all hands on her passage from Archangel. Dec. 17, Mr. R. Briggs, brewer and banker, died, aged 57. Dec. while the railway from Cambois to the links end was in course of construction the skeleton of a tall man was found a little beneath the surface, on the links near the High Pans. It was supposed that the remains were those of a person named Ross, who suddenly and mysteriously disappeared in the year 1808: he was last seen at the ferry boat landing, at the High Pans. It is clear that a murder had been committed, and if Ross was the victim his fate would furnish rich material to one of our modern novel writers, out of which to construct a sensational story, Ross having for years been asserting himself as the

legal heir to the Cambois estate, on which he had now met a violent death, and a secret burial place.

The most dreadful shipwreck of which we have any record in the history of our port, was that of the *Ocean Queen*. That vessel left Riga Nov. 29, 1866, with a cargo of deals for Hartlepool. She was leaky when she left, and had not proceeded far when she met with a gale of wind directly against her; she then made so much water that the crew were kept constantly at the pumps. The gale continuing, and the ship still making more water, in spite of all the efforts of the crew, it was determined to seek a port. At this time they were 120 miles from land. Soon after the ship was put before the wind she became water-logged, and the crew had to take to the masts; the ship then broached to, and fell on her beam ends, with the masts in the water. Two of the crew being unable to keep their hold fell into the sea and were drowned: the others managed to crawl to the side of the ship, where they remained till the masts gave way, and the ship righted again. And here the poor fellows without food or shelter were exposed to all the rigours of the stormy Baltic in the month of Dec. It was twelve days before the ship reached land, and two only of the crew were left to tell the sad story, and these more dead than alive. The others had one by one perished by cold and hunger. A boy survived but in a deplorable condition till the ship came to the beach, but died before his companions reached the shore. The survivors were the master John Curry, and Julius Folster, a foreigner. Both were dreadfully frost-bitten, and it was many months before they could be sent home. Folster will be a sad cripple for life, having lost both hands and feet. Mr. Curry, fortunately for him, has not suffered so badly.

1867. May 4th. A new Life-boat, presented by the

Royal National Life-boat Institution, was launched at Blyth this day amid great rejoicings. The Boat is a beautiful model, measuring 32ft. in length, 3ft. 6in. in width, rows 10 oars, and is double-banked. It was built from funds raised for the purpose in Manchester. The ceremony of presenting the Boat to the Port was commenced by the boat, with its crew in red caps, being drawn on its carriage through the town by eight horses, gaily decorated with ribbons. The procession marched four a-breast, and formed a column over half a mile in length; and it was computed that not less than 8000 persons were gathered together to witness the interesting ceremony. The boat was drawn up in front of a platform, and Capt. Robertson, of the National Lifeboat Society, handed the boat over to the Lifeboat committee. The boat (with crew on board) was then launched into the river, and named the *Salford*, when she was immediately pulled down to the pier end, accompanied by the Newbiggin lifeboat. After the various tests had been satisfactorily applied, the *Salford* was again landed, and conveyed to the boat house. June 27, the first shipment of coals from the new colliery at Cambois, was made at North Blyth, on board the *Jay* of Yarmouth. Nov. 6, the *Aln* was lost, with all hands, near Ostmahorn.

1868. Feb. 8, the highest tide on record; 18½ feet at Blyth. The low gardens all flooded, and much injured. March 3, the *Vesper* wrecked on Jutland; the master, John Potts, drowned. He had been upwards of 50 years at sea. March 23, the first screw collier, the *Weardale*, loaded Cambois coals for Havre. Feb. 26, James Ogle and Jonathan Woods were killed on board the *Earl of Sunderland*, by a collision with the *Triune*, off the Humber. June 24, collision between a passenger and coal train near Newsham—21 persons hurt. Compensation to parties injured cost the company above

£3000. Sept. 12, the first bottles were made at Messrs. Davidson's patent bottle works, Cowpen Quay. Sept. 8, telegraph laid from Jutland to Newbiggin, by the screw steamer *Archimedes*, W. Tate, master, of Blyth.

1869. Mar. 8, the *Sisters*, F. Horst, master, was lost at the West Indies. Master, mate, and four others, drowned. About this time two other Blyth vessels foundered with all hands, viz: the *John Bunyan*, Hugh Taggart, from Wales for Lisbon; and the *Janes*, S. Carlisle, from Blyth for Frederickshaven.

1862. On the forenoon of Thursday, the 16th of January, the huge cast iron beam of the pumping engine at Hartley Pit suddenly snapped asunder, and the ponderous piece of metal fell down the pit shaft, carrying along with it the timber by which the shaft was lined and the earth and stones which the timber supported, and thus entirely blocked up the shaft of the pit. The first effect of this sad occurrence was that five men, who were in the act of coming up, were thrown out of the cage in which they were ascending and killed; while three others, who were also in the cage, were able to hold on for five hours, and though a good deal injured were ultimately saved. 199 persons, men and boys, were in the lower workings of the pit at the time of the accident. Every effort which scientific skill could devise was immediately put forth in order to free the captives. For days and nights in succession the most energetic and unwearied exertions were made—viewers and pitmen vieing with each other, regardless of danger to themselves, in trying to render aid to the suffering. Her most gracious Majesty the Queen, amid her own sorrows, did not forget her humble suffering subjects, but sent a telegram from Osborne, intimating that she was “most anxious to hear that there were any hopes of saving the poor people in the pit, for whom her

heart bleeds." Day succeeded day, and on the sixth after the accident, two adventurous men effected an entrance into the gloomy cavern where death held carnival. On regaining the surface they agonizingly exclaimed, "The men are dead!—they are all dead!—there they lay, poor fellows, in rows: some of them reclining as if sleeping off a hard day's work!" Others were in a sitting posture, leaning against the wall; some had laid their heads on the bosom of their fathers; and brothers had crept together, as if their last moments had been spent in ministering consolation to each other. Of the large number in the mine not one has escaped from that ghastly sepulchre to tell the dismal story of the horrible imprisonment and lingering death: hence we know but little of what passed below. We know that the men make their way from the lower into the middle workings; for in the latter their bodies were found. We know that they attempted to escape through the "furnace drift;" for there saws and axes were lying, with their marks upon the obstructing beam. We know that they thought about their wives and children; for upon a tin can is the affecting record scratched: "Friday.—My dear Sarah, I leave you." We know that they sought mercy; for upon another can are discernible the words, "Mercy, O God!" And we know further that some of the number survived until Sunday, for on that day the last "jowlings," or signal noises, were heard by the men working in the shaft. We know that all perished from the poisoning gas: we know all this; but we know no more. How they met their end; what were their feelings while they helplessly perished, almost within hail of wives and children, brothers and sisters, can now never be known in time. The English public, with characteristic benevolence, has contributed nobly to the relief of the widows and orphans, and other

dependents of the slain. The subscription was the largest ever known for a similar purpose; and not till the announcement was published that more than enough had been collected for the permanent benefit of the survivors did money cease to flow into the treasurer's hands.

The following is an abstract of the Balance Sheet of the Relief Fund, from February 29th, 1868, to February 29th, 1869 :—

Allowances to Widows, Orphans, &c.....	£3064	10	6
Education	246	6	9
Medical attendance	86	2	0
Outfit for Children	34	0	0
Allowances in respect of Deaths	7	0	0
Marriage Portions	80	0	0
Secretary's salary, and other items.....	146	0	0
Interest on Banking Account	5	2	3
Balance of Fund Invested	49888	1	2

Number of Recipients :—Widows, 45; children of widows, 184; adults, 28; children of adults, 9. Total—266.

It is to be regretted that the Parish Books of the last century have not been preserved, as they would have been useful in various ways, in elucidating the history of the town; from other sources I have obtained some items of information about Poor Rate. In 1725, Edward Alder is paid 8s. 4d. for a year's poor cess; 1731, John Elliott is paid 16s. 8d. for a year's poor cess, for the 8 pans. The number of pans had been doubled by those brought from Cullercoats in 1727. In 1761, J. Pearson receives the sum of £1 6s. 8d., for a year's poor cess, for the salt pans; paid the same for F. Barrow's farm 13s.: this small sum for the farm is inexplicable. 1769, Joseph Duxfield is paid for a year's poor cess £1; all these items show that up to this period the

poor rate had been extremely light, but in the course of the next 34 years, a change for the worse had taken place.

The earliest rate book that has come into my hand is one containing a rate made November 2nd, 1803. It contains the names of 160 ratepayers, and the rateable value amounts to £2376, and the rate is 9d. in the £ for 3 months. John Dolmahoy, who died in October, 1869, was then a ratepayer, and has thus been a householder for 66 years. On the 7th February, 1804, a public meeting was held at Mr. Sheraton's, Star and Garter Inn, the result of which we give in the very odd form in which it appears in the rate book. "It is agreed by the undersigned, that a general valuation is to be made concerning the poor rates, to have a valuation upon all lands, tenements, and hereditaments, that is liable to pay the contribution of the poor in the township of South Blyth and Newsham. And it is further agreed by the undersigned, that Mr. Fryer, of Newcastle, is approved on to value the township of Blyth and Newsham. Signed by James Watson, Henry Wilson, Robert Potts, George Duxfield, Adam Morrison, Luke Brown, William Chapman, Cuthbert Forster, William Sheraton." The first four of these were farmers, and the other five were tradesmen. The result of the new valuation was to increase the rateable value of the township to £3046, or about 29 per cent., the increase being chiefly on the land. Till this valuation the tithes had not been rated, and still it did not reach all property legally liable to be rated. The railway, staith, quays, harbour dues, and workmen's houses still went scot free; more than a quarter of a century passing before these properties were made to contribute their share to the poor's rate.

In 1804, the names of 73 persons appear as in receipt

of parochial relief, at the cost of £95 a quarter, besides £7 9s. 4d. paid to Mr. Mason of Newcastle, who at that time kept a private poor's house, and farmed the poor of several parishes. Blyth for many years kept that portion of its poor, that required the accommodation of a workhouse, in the private workhouse at Newcastle. Feb. 1804, there is paid to Geo. Duxfield £2 17s., for a half-year's county rate, and for church cess for Earsdon, £1 18s. 9d.

The church rate was never levied upon the ratepayers of Blyth as a special rate, it was originally charged upon the farms in the township, but had by some means been put upon the poor rate. It continued to be paid from this source till the new poor law came into operation in 1836. From that time it was smuggled into the highway accounts, in the form of "Extra Team," till 1859, when it was objected to by a ratepayer, at the Petty Sessions, at Tynemouth, and disallowed; from that period the township ceased to pay church cess.

Notwithstanding the increase of the rateable value of the township in 1804, in a short time the rate went up to 1s. in the £, many families being thrown on the parish by the war then raging. Numbers of our seamen were either detained in a French prison, or torn from their home and made to serve in a ship of war, exposed to all the hazards of storm and battle—for £1 12s. 6d. a month; while if they had been allowed the liberty enjoyed by all other British working men, they could have earned for the support of their families from £8 to £10 a voyage. The rates never fell below 1s. until 1854, and in 1836 they amounted to 1s. 6d. in the £: the Cholera having just visited Blyth, causing much additional expense to the Township. By this time the Phoenix Benefit Society had very materially reduced the number of applicants for parochial relief, and has

ever since greatly lessened the pressure of the poor rate, a fact that should be borne in mind by those whose means would enable them to render aid to that noble institution.

To enable the reader to understand to what purposes the poor's rate is applied, we give a copy of the statement of the account rendered by the Guardians to the Overseers of the Poor of the Township of Blyth and Newsham, for the half-year ending Lady Day, 1869—

Contribution to Common Fund	£382	7	5
Instalment of Workhouse Loan	5	0	0
County Rate	59	7	9
County Police Rate	47	7	8
Nuisance removal	1	3	10

The three last items show that our township contributes for County and Police purposes, at the rate of £216 per annum.

On the 5th of May, 1859, the Vestry passed a resolution authorising the Burial Board to borrow a sum of £2000 from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, for the laying out the grounds of the Cemetery, and erecting the necessary buildings, on security of the future poor's rate of the township. The sum actually borrowed was £2500, of which amount the overseers have paid to the Burial Board £2000—this will have paid the interest and about one-half of the principal; the obligations of the Burial Board, and their requirements from the township being correspondingly diminished. It will thus be seen that the poor's rate is a convenient means of raising funds for various public purposes other than the relief of the poor.

At the Election of 1832, for the southern division of the county, (the first after the passing of the Reform Bill) the candidates were T. W. Beaumont and Wm. Ord, on the liberal side, and Matthew Bell, on the conservative interest; thirty-two Blyth electors voted on the occasion, nearly all of whom had been enfranchised

by the Reform Bill. Of these twenty split upon Beaumont and Ord, three split upon Bell and Ord, one split upon Bell and Beaumont, one plumped for Ord, and eleven plumped for Bell. At the same election sixty-two electors for Cowpen voted as follows:—sixteen split on Beaumont and Ord, five on Bell and Ord, eleven on Beaumont and Bell, and thirty plumped for Bell. Beaumont and Bell were returned—the numbers were, Beaumont, 2537—Bell, 2441—and Ord 2351. At the contested election of 1852, W. B. Beaumont and George Ridley were the liberal candidates, and Henry G. Liddell was the conservative candidate. Of the electors for Blyth, fifteen plumped for Liddell, four split on Beaumont and Ridley, five split on Ridley and Liddell, and six did not vote. Of the electors for Cowpen thirty-three plumped for Liddell, thirty-six split on Beaumont and Ridley, five split on Beaumont and Liddell, four between Ridley and Liddell, and twenty-five did not vote. Beaumont polled 2306—Liddell, 2132—and Ridley 2033.

So large a portion of the town of Blyth being situate in the township of Cowpen, appears to require that before concluding this book, we should briefly summarize its history.

The village of Cowpen is very ancient, having been a place of some importance in Saxon times, when it obtained its name from a kind of fair having been held there, where the rude trade of the times was conducted (in the absence of money) by “couping,” or bartering, or exchanging one commodity for another. It does not appear to have been the residence of any great family in feudal times. “Cupun,” in 1240, was accounted a manor in the barony of Bolam, the lords of which place prior to that time, but by deeds without date, had granted various possessions here to the canons of Brink-

burn. James de Bolam granted them a salt pan in "Cupun," of which they had charters of confirmation by Gilbert and Walter de Bolam, as well as the Bishop of Durham. Roger Fitz Hugh made them one, and John Fitz Hugh two grants of land here, one of which was confirmed to them by Walter de Bolam; and King John in 1201 granted them "lands between the salt works and the way which led from the Cup-well to the mill at Cupun."

Shortly before the lion-hearted Richard departed for Palestine, on the third crusade, (1190) he granted to the monks serving God in the Church of St. Oswin's, a general confirmation of their then extensive possessions, among which was the village of Copun. We give the Charter, as it brings out sundry antiquated, but doubtless valuable reliques of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence.

"Richard, by the grace of God, King of England. Be it made known unto you, that we have granted by our present Charter, confirmed unto God, and the church of St. Oswin, of Tynemouth, and the Monks of St. Alban's, there serving God, all their men, and all their lands, and all their possessions, that is to say [several properties are then named, including "half of the vill of Copun"]. All these we grant to the monks afore-said, with rents and homages, with meadows and pastures, with woods and *turbaries*,* and all other things to the said vills pertaining; with *sac*† and *soc*‡ on stronde or stream, on wonde and felde; with 'tol' and theam. *Gridburh*,§ *Hamsocna*,|| and the money which pertaineth to murder; forestal, *danegeld*,¶ *infangthef*,**

* *Turbaries*. The places where turf is dug in waste lands.—† *Sac*. The privilege enjoyed by the lord of the manor of holding courts, trying causes, and imposing fines.—‡ *Soc*. Liberty or privilege of tenants excused from all customary burdens.—§ *Gridburh*. Keeping the peace of the town.—|| *Hamsocna*. Protection from assault or disturbance in a man's house.—¶ *Danegeld*. Money paid for every hide of land by the

bloodywytha,†† wrec, and *cornage*.††” The royal grantor added all liberties and free customs which kings could have power to grant, or make more free, to any church.

Brinkburn and Tynemouth had each Salt Works in Cupun. Salt Works at a remote period of our history were sources of great wealth. In 1307, Tynemouth had a pardon for acquiring four tofts and seventy acres of land in Cupun, without a license of mortmain. Cowpen, during the domination of the see of Rome over this kingdom, did not, however, exclusively belong to the Monks—John and Roger de Widdrington. in the time of Edward the third, made a settlement of property in Cowpen. 27th Aug., 1402, John Rogers and Margaret his wife, daughter and heir of John Slikeborn, conveyed to Mr. Johnson, of Newcastle, a messuage in “Copen.” In 1536, William Green, the collector of farms for the Monks, doth answer for 100s., for the tithe of Cowpen; but not for the 20s., for the tithe of grain in Newsum. The Prior and Convent of Tynemouth, by indenture, dated 24th June, 1530, leased to John Preston and Nicholas Mitford, to farm a Coal Pit with two “lez pigges,” lying in the fields of Bebside and Cowpen for seven years, at the yearly rent of 22s. and 8d., payable equally on the feast of St. Oswin, in Lent, and on St. Oswin’s day in harvest. After the dissolution of the monastery of Tynemouth, its possessions were leased to Sir J. Hilton, at the annual rent to the crown of £163 1s. 5d.; and was made for 21 years. The first year he farmed, Cowpen paid 6s. 8d. for the fines of brewers for the assize of bread and ale, as had

Saxons to the Danes, by way of tribute.—** *Infangthef*. Right to take a thief and judge him if taken on their own manor.—†† *Bloodywytha*. Cognizance for blood shedding: amercement for bloodshed.—†† *Cornage*. Many lands in the north of England were held by the tenure of Cornage: that is, the tenant was bound to wind a horn, to give notice to the king’s lieges of the approach of the Scottish invaders.

been paid by the inhabitants there for many years past. At this period we have rents of tenants at Cowpen—John Robeyson, the bailiff there, accounts for 52s. 4d. for the rents of the following freeholders, to wit:—the heirs of John Preston, George Harbottel, the heirs of Roger Hardyng, John Fenwick, Gawin Midforth, Thomas Robeyson, Christopher Bell, the heirs of —Harbottel, and Ralph Witherington: and for £7 5s. 8d. for the rent of 22 copyholders, each holding a tenement or cottage, with arable land, meadow and pasture for oxen, horses and sheep, in the common pasture, in various quantities and at different rents: and for 33s. 4d. for the farm of a windmill at Cowpen: and for £4 10s. for the farm of two salt pans, with a coal pit leased by the abbot to Richard Benson, and for the farm of two salt pans and a coal pit held by Cuthbert Robeyson, at the king's pleasure.

At the Reformation we find 22 copyholders on the lands of the monastery of Tynemouth: these would be the descendants of the villans of a former age, who belonged to the monks. By the charter of Richard I, he gave the men along with lands. The services the villans would have to render would be something like the following: each of these had a tenement or cottage, with arable land, meadow and pasture, &c., in various quantities and at different rents: they had had these holdings, when in a state of villanage, to provide for the daily wants of their families, for which they had to render certain services to the abbot. If the arable land amounted to 30 acres the villan would pay 2s. rent, 6d. for scot-pennies, half a chalder of oats, 16d. for over-pennies, lead five wood lades, provide 2 hens and 10 eggs; and perform three days' work for the abbot every week (excepting one week in Easter and at Pentecost), and thirteen days at Christmas; perform so many portions

of mowing in harvest, with all his family except the housewife; plough and harrow three roods of avereve; and for each caracute of land in their tenure the tenants in villanage shall plough and harrow two acres, and are quit from all further work that week; and in the course of their work they harrow and (if need be) make cart loads, and during the latter service they receive each a loaf of bread.

Cottagers were in a somewhat better position; they had learned some handicraft, such as joiner or smith. They held a certain number of acres, and worked two days a week for the abbot the year round (except the holidays), and provided 12 hens and 60 eggs. The punder had land (attached to his office), and a thrave of corn for every draught, and paid 80 hens and 500 eggs. The whole tenantry in villanage had to give their share of certain dues, as cornage, size of bread and ale, &c.

The question arises, What has become of these copy holders? They must have formed a large portion of the inhabitants, as 22 were only those upon the half of Cowpen; Brinkburn had the other half, and probably had as many copyholders as Tynemouth; this number added to the nine freeholders then in Cowpen, without counting any for the Brinkburn property, makes the number of families in the possession of land amount to 31. The process of the larger landowners buying up the properties of the smaller ones has been going on in Cowpen, as it has been doing all over England, till there is not half a dozen landowners in the township.

Till 1619 the lands were all open and inconveniently intermixed; but on Nov. 15th in that year the several proprietors entered into articles with each other to make an equal division in severalty of the township, proportionably to every one's right; and for that purpose employed William Matthews, a skilful surveyor. The

parties to the articles for dividing the township in 1610 were, Sir Ralph Delaval, Robert Widdrington, Lewis Widdrington, Tristram Fenwick (for himself and children, heirs to Magdalen, their mother, deceased), Martin Fenwick, John Preston the elder, and John Preston the younger, William Storey, and Robert Smith. All these old names have vanished out of the rentals. In a will made by one of the Widdringtons, of Choppington, dated January 8th, 1589, among other bequests,

"I give, after the death of my mother, to Ralph Wallis, my servant, my farmholds in Cowpen during his life; also, I give him my bay mares."

In the Will of Robert Widdrington, of Wearmouth, dated August 29th, 1598, he says, "I leave to my wife, Elizabeth, the house, demayne, and farmhold in Monkwearmouth, for her life, and (if she cannot enjoy it free of all trouble and encumbrance) my salt works in Cowpen shall be charged to pay her £100 yearly." In the Inventory of his property, he has at Cowpen three salt pans, £40; five oxen £7 10s.; 120 thrave of rye £18; ten score thrave of oats £12; the half of a coal keel. Thus it appears the Widdringtons held property in Cowpen for a very long period. Robert Delaval and John Preston, of Cowpen, gentlemen, were both summoned to the assizes at Newcastle in 1628, and in the same year the viscountal rent for this place was 13s. 4d. And the sheriff accounted into exchequer for a rent of £4 for Cowpen coal mine; for £2 for a salt pan, from Thomas Bates; and £3 for two other salt pans in Cowpen. In 1663, the proprietors were Sir Francis Bowes, Robert Preston, Sir Thomas Widdrington, Mr. John Proctor, John Smith, Mr. William Widdrington of Burnhill, Mr. John Fenwick of Deanman, Robert Preston, Jun., and Cuthbert Watson. Thomas Preston, John Richardson, Jacob Russel, and Cuthbert Watson, voted for freeholders in Cowpen at the election for Northumberland in 1748. The rental for county rate in Cowpen in 1663 was £308; in 1829, £4,716; at present not less than £14,000!

The following are the names of the Four-and-twenty, who met at Horton, on Easter Tuesday, April 12, 1726:

William Simcoe, vicar
Thomas Skipsey
Cuthbert Watson
Christopher Jubb
Robert Rowell
Ralph Atkinson
Stephen Bruiss
Edward Shotton

Thomas Purviss
Robert Nicholson
Thomas Rowell
John Rowell
Thomas Mavin
Cuthbert Ogle
William Reed
John Barker

Henry Johnson
Robert Swan
Alexander Carnes
John Dixon
John Bowry
Henry Pigg
James Gray
Roger Bell

Cuthbert Watson, Esq., of Cowpen, and William Reed, Esq., of Hartford, were the two chief men in the parish; the other names are those chiefly of farmers. I am not aware that there is a single male descendent of any one of the above Four-and-twenty now living in the parish.

It was not until 1737, that the several townships of the parish of Horton each began to keep its own poor. Previous to that period the poor were kept out of a cess levied upon each of the townships, not upon the rental, but a fixed sum, as follows:—Horton £2 6s. 3d.; West Hartford 7s. 6d.; East Hartford 4s. 6d.; Bebside 11s. 6d.; Cowpen £1 10s. 0d.; Tythes 2s. 6d.; Total £5 2s. 3d. When the Four-and-Twenty met at Horton, on Easter Tuesday, the Churchwardens were authorised to levy on the several townships one cess, or one and a half, and in some cases two cesses for the requirements of the year.

“Horton, Easter Tuesday, 1735.—It is this day agreed by the Minister and Four-and-Twenty, or a majority of them, that Mrs. Mary Johnson, as an inhabitant of this parish, shall for the future pay for the maintenance of the poor, the sum of sixpence a-week for her house and gardens, in the parish, signed John Watson, curate.” This Mrs. Johnson would be the proprietor and occupant of Bebside Hall; whether Mrs. Johnson had resisted the payment of the amount laid upon her house and gardens we cannot say, but the next year (March 6th, 1736) there is a memorandum of an agreement made, and published in the church “That the township of Horton, from this day, made a separation of themselves from the rest of the constabularies in the parish, in relation to the maintenance of the poor, and are not disposed to take in, or maintain any poor, after this day, but which falls upon this township.”

April 12th, 1737. The township of West Hartford constabulary, in the parish of Horton, do likewise agree from the date hereof, to declare ourselves separate for the future from the parish, in maintaining our poor, and will not take any poor but such as shall hereafter become chargeable to us by law."

April 12th. "I, Alexander Carnes, constable of East Hartford, do for my constabulary declare the same as above." "I, Thomas Skipsey, constable for Cowpen township, do declare the same as above."

This statement of the breaking up of the parish of Horton into separate townships for the administration of the Poor Law, furnishes the best account of how such matters were effected that I have met with. The rate-payers at that time took a course directly the opposite of the centralizing system now in vogue.

The Crofts hold 800 acres, about one-half of the township of Cowpen, and the same as Sir Francis Bowes held in 1663. It is in this portion of the township that such great improvements have been made in the last eighty years. The way was opened to effect those improvements, by an act of parliament obtained in 1784, to empower Margaret Bowes, spinster, Lieutenant-colonel Thomas Thoroton, and Anne, his wife, to grant leases of their settled estates, in Northumberland, &c.

Through the powers conferred by this act, Cowpen Quay was built, and the slake was enclosed, and filled up; and leases of portions of the lands in Cowpen, were granted for three lives, with a perpetual right of renewal, on paying a fine of £5, for each life. The houses at Crofton, Waterloo, Cowpen Quay, &c. were all built on these renewable leases until 1856, when another act of parliament was procured, by which the lands and hereditaments formerly of Margaret Bowes, the testatrix of 1755, and Alice Wanley, testatrix of 1772.

were vested in Edward Thoroton, of the Inner Temple, London, Esq., and George Arthur Hutton Croft, of Hutton Bushell, in the county of York, Esq., upon trust to lease, sell, or dispose thereof, subject to the provisions of the act. Latterly building sites have been bought on a freehold tenure, and the former leaseholders have had the option of enfranchisement on moderate terms.

A correct notion may be formed of the extent of the improvements that have been effected in the township of Cowpen since the Act of 1784, if we consider that outside the village at that time there was nothing but the half-dozen farmsteads that still remain, Buckshill, and the two or three houses that are still standing inside Cowpen Square. All the other buildings in the township have been erected since then. The township was paying, in 1736, £1 10s. per annum for the relief of the poor, and is now paying to the Guardians of the poor for the Tynemouth Union the sum of £1,000 a year. The tithes that amounted to 100s. in 1536, now amount to £292, viz.:—Duke of Northumberland, £135; W. H. M. Sidney, Esq., £124; Rev. M. Mangin, small tithes, £33.



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